THE CABLE GUY

by

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COPY

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FADE IN:
TITLE SEQUENCE

INT. LIVING ROOM OF PAUL RICHARD'S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

The apartment looks brand new with new carpets and freshly painted walls. It's a very small apartment and looks like it's in one of those generic, large new complexes. The living room is filled with cardboard boxes, and it appears that someone is still moving-in. While the credits continue, the CAMERA FOCUSES on PAUL RICHARDS, a young man in his early twenties. PAUL appears to be clean-cut and fairly conservative. As for his personality, he's well-educated, but he certainly wouldn't qualify as being "street-smart." At the moment, PAUL is unloading one of the cardboard boxes. First, he takes out his college diploma and briefly looks at it. It is from the University of Madison, Wisconsin, dated from last year. It lists his Major as English. He places the diploma in a new, small entertainment center. Next, he takes out several framed photographs. The first photo displays he and his family back in Apple Valley, Wisconsin. This picture looks like a Norman Rockwell painting. The other photos include one of PAUL and a sheepdog shaking hands, and several of PAUL and an attractive girl cuddling in romantic places. When the CREDITS END, the telephone rings. PAUL puts down what he's holding, walks a few feet to the phone, and answers it.

PAUL
(into telephone)
Hello...
(pause)
Hey, Mark...What's going on?
(pause)
No...I don't know if I can...The cable guy's <u>still</u> not here yet... It's getting ridiculous.

PAUL glances at his watch.

PAUL
(continuing, into phone)
It's already six o'clock. He was supposed to be here between 8:00 and 5:00...

The doorbell rings. PAUL looks towards the front door.

PAUL
(continuing, into phone)
...Listen, that might be him... How long are you gonna be around?

The doorbell starts to ring again, three times quickly. PAUL, a bit surprised, looks towards the front door.

PAUL
(continuing, hurried)
...Call me back in five minutes.

PAUL hangs up the telephone. As he does this, the doorbell begins to ring continuously. It continues ringing until PAUL arrives at the front door and opens it. Standing there is the CABLE GUY. In a rush, he quickly walks into PAUL'S apartment.

CABLE GUY
Jesus Christ! How long are you gonna keep a guy waiting?

The CABLE GUY is somewhere in his thirties. His exact age doesn't matter, as long as he looks 8-15 years older than PAUL. The CABLE GUY is definitely not good-looking, but he doesn't have to be ugly either. He has a character face of a slightly sleazy guy who is positively not from a Connecticut Family. He carries himself like a hustler and has a huge amount of confidence with everything he does, everything he says, and everything he wears. Currently, he's wearing a cable repairman's uniform, which is similar to a gas station attendant's uniform: Navy-blue polyester slacks and a light-blue pinstriped shirt with a name-patch. The name patch reads "Friendly Cable." Before PAUL can say anything...

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
By the way, you got a boring fucking doorbell. It sounds like being in Church or something... And the last thing I'd want a chick thinking about at my place is Church...

The CABLE GUY walks back out the front door and looks at the doorbell.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
I could fix this for you--You know, hook it up so it plays something like...the theme to The Godfather.

The CABLE GUY simulates pressing a doorbell. Then, imitating the sound of a doorbell, he sings the first few instrumental bars of the Godfather Theme.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
Ba-ba-boo-be-ba-doo-be-doo...

PAUL is clearly taken aback by all of this and looks shocked. The CABLE GUY walks back into the living room and sees that PAUL is looking at him strangely.

CABLE GUY
Hey, don't give me that look. You're the one with the boring doorbell. I should be looking at you weird.

PAUL
(defensively)
I'm sorry, but it's six o'clock at night...And you were supposed to be here between 8:00 and 5:00. I wasted my whole day waiting for you.

CABLE GUY
Don't blame me. You could have read a book or something...I was busy. My one o'clock was a real beaut...a Laker girl...a body like this:

The CABLE GUY motions the curves of a voluptuous woman's body.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
After I hooked up her stations, we took a bubble bath.

The CABLE GUY looks around the living room and focuses on the average sized tv in the entertainment center.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
Alright...So what do you want? HBO, Showtime, Movie Channel, and Cinemax? ...What about Disney? You want Disney? I'd definitely recommend it. They had Bambi on the other night...I cried my eyes out.

PAUL
(still taken aback)
Well...No. I just wanted to sign up for the, you know, basic cable.

CABLE GUY
(a bit irritated)
What do you mean "basic"?

PAUL
You know, Channels 2 through 13, maybe CNN...

The CABLE GUY shakes his head back and forth in disgust.

CABLE GUY
When was the last time you got laid?

PAUL
Excuse me?

CABLE GUY
You heard me. When was the last time you got laid? Because if it's been a while, and it looks like it has, you're not going to get any action with Channels 2 through 13.

PAUL
This is ridiculous.

CABLE GUY
What's ridiculous? If you meet a hot piece of ass at a bar and you take her home with you, what are you going to show her, Ted Koppel?
(more gently)
At the same time, you can't just jump her...you've got to watch a movie for a little while...relax her...set the mood...then stick your tongue in her ear.

PAUL
First of all, I'm not into taking girls home with me from bars.... But even if I was, I could always rent a movie.

CABLE GUY
At midnight? The video stores aren't open.

The CABLE GUY takes his toolbag off of his shoulder, places it on the ground, then sits down on PAUL'S couch.

PAUL
(frustrated)
Look, I appreciate what you're trying to do...I'm sure those movie channels are great, but I really don't want to spend the extra money.

The CABLE GUY folds his arms and looks at PAUL sternly.

CABLE GUY
Oh, so we finally get down to the real issue: Money.

PAUL
Well, the channels do cost money, don't they?

CABLE GUY
Sure they cost money. What doesn't? When you go out to the movies, it costs money, doesn't it?

PAUL
Well, yeah, but...

CABLE GUY
(interrupting)
And when you go to dinner or a ballgame...that costs money too, right?

PAUL
Sure, but...

CABLE GUY
(interrupting again)
So what are you complaining about? Cable is a luxury. It's entertainment. You get movies, concerts, the Atlanta Braves, Joe Franklin... And you don't think you should have to pay for it?

PAUL
No, I didn't say that. It's just that on my budget, it's a little expensive.

CABLE GUY
How can you say it's expensive when you haven't even made me an offer? I'm a reasonable man. Tell me how badly you want the stations, and I'll see what I can do.

PAUL
You want me to make you an offer?

CABLE GUY
Absolutely. Name any amount... Just don't insult me.

PAUL
You're saying that if I pay you some amount of money under-the-table, I can have all the movie stations?

CABLE GUY
For as long as you want. But before you decide on a price...

The CABLE GUY gets up from the couch and is now standing.

CABLE GUY
(continuing, very dramatically)
...Imagine being sick in bed with the flu...You're sick as a dog, can't keep anything in your stomach, and it's 4:00 in the afternoon...You lean over, look at the tv guide...And what's on? On 2, you've got Geraldo; On 4, it's some talk-show with John Tesh; On 7, you've got <u>something else</u> with John Tesh; And on every other station, you've got the Best Of Bugs Bunny...You start to feel sicker, but then you look further down in the tv guide...You suddenly notice that Blazing Saddles is on HBO...You could be laughing your ass off! ...But you <u>don't have</u> HBO. ...And on the Movie Channel, the frigin' Sound Of Music is on...and you could be singin' along with those Swedish kids...But you <u>don't have</u> the Movie Channel either... And on Showtime, it's 9 and 1/2 Weeks-<u>The Director's Cut</u>...with the <u>original</u> whipped cream scene! ...But instead of seeing that, you've got to watch John Tesh...

The telephone rings. PAUL hesitates for a moment, unsure if he should answer it.

PAUL
(politely)
Uh...Could you excuse me for a second?

PAUL walks over to the kitchen counter and picks up the telephone.

PAUL
(continuing, into phone)
Hello. Mark...Yeah, he's still here...Where are we meeting?

Paul grabs a piece of scratch paper and pen.

PAUL
(continuing)
Okay..."Backstreets"...around 7:00. I'll try to make it. Bye.

PAUL hangs up the phone. The CABLE GUY has clearly overheard the short conversation.

CABLE GUY
Don't go to "Backstreets." It's out. The chicks there listen to the Monkees.

PAUL
Can we get back to this?

CABLE GUY
Alright. We were negotiating price. Make me an offer.

PAUL
(impatiently)
I'm not making you an offer. I don't need those stations. Please just give me the basic cable and let me meet my friend.

The CABLE GUY shakes his head in amazement. Disappointed, he turns towards the cable cord coming out of the wall.

CABLE GUY
...Hey, if basic's what you want, basic's what you're gonna get...
(pause)
But I'm warning you right now: If you flip on your tv late one night, you're not gonna see anyone doin' the Wild Thing.

CUT TO:

INT. BACKSTREETS RESTAURANT/BAR - EVENING

This is a fairly lively place. PAUL is sitting at a table with his friend, MARK SIMMONS. They are both eating sandwiches. Their table is across the room from the bar, which is clearly visible from where they're sitting. MARK is around the same age as PAUL, though he carries himself a bit more confidently. As for physical appearance, MARK is a fairly average-looking guy, but he looks more rugged than PAUL. At the moment, PAUL is looking down at his sandwich while eating it, and he appears to have his mind elsewhere.

MARK
...So, how's the new place?

PAUL looks up from his plate.

PAUL
Fine. I mean, it's a lot better than my first four months out here...with that roommate.

There is a moment of silence. PAUL still seems distracted.

PAUL
(continuing)
...I just can't get over this Cable Guy today...First, he complains about my doorbell... Then he asks me when I last got laid...

MARK
So what? It sounds like he was gonna give you a great deal. I had to slip my cable guy 200 bucks to hook up the movie stations for me.

PAUL
(surprised)
You don't pay for your stations?

MARK
Of course not. Nobody does... I mean, don't get me wrong: I'm sure Donald Trump pays for his stations...and Michael Jordan, too...Guys like that keep the cable companies in business, because they probably have thirty tv's...But guys like us, in our price range...I don't know anyone who pays.

PAUL
But what if you get caught?

MARK
No problem. You just tell them you didn't know...that you thought it was all included...and that you'll pay for them from now on.

PAUL
(thinking about this)
...It just seems like a big headache...just to see a few extra movies a month.

MARK
What's the headache? Those channels can save you a fortune. ...For example, on a Sunday morning, after some girl would stay over at my place, she'd always want to do "something fun." You know, like go to brunch at the beach...rent rollerblades...take the Universal Studios Tour...But now that I have these stations, I just give her the remote control, and let her watch anything she wants. For the rest of the day, she's happy.

PAUL
But I'm not interested in bringing new girls back to my place. I'm trying to get back together with Robin.

MARK
Exactly...And don't you think Robin would love it if you got the stations? She works in the movie business...She needs to keep up to date with all that stuff... Plus, you told me that she loves old romantic movies. They're on all the time...

PAUL ponders this thought for a moment. MARK becomes distracted by something he sees.

MARK
(continuing)
Jesus...Look at that blonde. She's incredible.

There is a quick CLOSE-UP of a gorgeous blonde with an incredible body. She is standing alone at the crowded bar across the room. PAUL doesn't bother looking.

MARK
(continuing, to PAUL)
Would you look at this woman, please?

PAUL gives a quick glance to the bar.

PAUL
I told you: I'm not interested.

MARK
Not interested? This woman has legs that could strangle Hulk Hogan.

MARK suddenly looks disappointed.

MARK
(continuing)
Never mind. She's with a guy. And she's all over him...

MARK takes one more look.

MARK
(continuing)
...Not that I'm one to judge other guys...But she could do a hell-of-a-lot better than him.

PAUL takes another quick glance towards the bar, then looks shocked.

PAUL
Oh, my God! That's him! That's the Cable Guy!

MARK
Who is?

PAUL
The guy with the blonde! That's the guy who was over at my place today!

There is a CLOSE-UP of the gorgeous blonde at the bar, and she is no longer alone. She is hanging all over the CABLE GUY, who we saw at PAUL'S apartment in the previous scene. He is wearing a very tacky shirt, which is unbuttoned down to his mid-chest, and which borders on looking "late 1970's." He certainly looks different than in his cable outfit, but that doesn't mean he looks good.

MARK
(still staring)
The guy is a total stud...Look at him. She won't let him go.

There is another CLOSE-UP of the CABLE GUY. He stops concentrating on the blonde for a moment and looks over at PAUL and MARK. The CABLE GUY whispers something to the blonde, and then they both start to walk over to PAUL's and MARK's table. In a moment, they arrive at the table.

CABLE GUY
(to PAUL)
Well, well, well...If it isn't the guy who said "no" to Walt Disney...

PAUL looks a bit defensive.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
Say hello to GINGER, boys.

GINGER, PAUL, and MARK ad-lib "hello," and then there is a moment of silence.

PAUL
(to CABLE GUY)
...I thought you said that this place was out...that "the chicks here listen to the Monkees."

CABLE GUY
(unashamed)
Yeah, well, GINGER here likes the Monkees.

MARK is staring at GINGER in ecstacy.

MARK
I like the Monkees. The Monkees are cool.

CABLE GUY
(to PAUL)
Actually, I'm glad I ran into you. After I left your place, I was thinking about why you didn't make me an offer...You thought it was way out of your price range. Am I right?

PAUL
(hesitating)
Well...I...

CABLE GUY
(interrupting)
That's what I thought. You being a young guy, probably just out of college, you don't have a lot of money to throw around. True?

PAUL
(still hesitating)
Well, that's true, but...

CABLE GUY
(interrupting again)
Alright, then...I'll tell you what I'm gonna do: I'm gonna give you the stations for free...for nothing...up front. After that, you can pay me whatever you think is fair. You know, we'll kind of "keep a tab."...So if you watch Willy Wonka And The Chocolate Factory, put aside a buck...If you watch Batman, put aside 50 cents... You get the idea...And I trust you...So, I'll be over tomorrow after work to hook you up.

MARK
(excitedly to PAUL)
That's a great deal.

PAUL
(hesitating)
I'm still not sure...

CABLE GUY
What's not to be sure about?
(turning to GINGER)
Hey, Babe, do you have the list?

GINGER reaches into her purse and retrieves a piece of paper which she gives to the CABLE GUY.

CABLE GUY
Tomorrow night's line-up happens to be dynamite:
(looks at paper)
You've got Three Ninjas on HBO... The Cyndi Lauper Concert on Showtime...And, Police Academy Part IV on the Movie Channel... I think Part IV is the one where the new cadets put Crazy Glue in Bubba Smith's underwear...Or was that Part III? ...Who knows, maybe I'll stay and check it out with you.

The CABLE GUY folds up the piece of paper and gives it back to GINGER. They start to walk away.

CABLE GUY
(to PAUL)
So, I'll catch you tomorrow.

PAUL
Wait...I need to think about this.

CABLE GUY
There's nothing to think about.
I'm not charging you.

The CABLE GUY and GINGER walk away. PAUL tries to call out after them, but the restaurant is much too loud with music playing and people talking. PAUL has a helpless expression on his face.

CUT TO:

INT. MAILROOM OF SPRINGHOUSE PUBLISHING COMPANY - MORNING

The mailroom is a nice, clean mailroom in a new building. PAUL is sorting through mail with three other young guys around his age and a young woman of the same age. One of the young guys is MARK, who we met in the last scene. Sitting behind a desk and wearing a rumpled tweed suit is the mailroom supervisor, HARRY FEINSTEIN. HARRY is a cynical man in his early 50's who has been the mailroom supervisor for 15 years. At the moment, HARRY is eating a submarine sandwich and his mouth is full. PAUL looks over at him.

PAUL
Hey, Harry...Would you mind if I
make a phone call?

HARRY
(with his mouth full)
Help yourself.

HARRY nods his head towards the phone on his desk.

PAUL
(hesitating)
...Actually, it's kind of personal.
I wanted to use the pay phone in
the hall.

HARRY
I've been married three times, kid.
I've heard it all...But if you want
to waste a quarter, go ahead.

PAUL
Thanks, Harry.

PAUL walks out of the mailroom.

CUT TO:

INT. SPRINGHOUSE PUBLISHING HALLWAY - MORNING

PAUL is standing in the hallway at a payphone near the restrooms. He is on the telephone and we can hear what is going on at the other end of the line. After three rings, the other end is answered.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Colossal Entertainment.

PAUL
Reception, please.

There are two quick rings, as is typical of an interoffice phone system.

CUT TO:

INT. COLOSSAL ENTERTAINMENT LOBBY - MORNING

The telephone is ringing on the reception desk, due to PAUL'S phone call. The lobby is exactly what you'd expect a new mid-sized entertainment company's lobby to be. Everything is very new, sparkling clean, and the art is modern. The young woman sitting behind the desk is ROBIN FIELDS. She is the same attractive girl who was seen holding hands with PAUL in the pictures at PAUL'S apartment. She is in her early twenties and looks to be around the same age as PAUL. Like PAUL, she's well-educated and was also an English Major in college. However, she was captivated by the movie industry, while PAUL had aspired more to literature. As for ROBIN'S looks, she is definitely attractive. She would be more accurately described as pretty or cute, rather than beautiful or incredibly sexy. She is natural-looking and doesn't wear a lot of make-up. As for her values, she is quite idealistic, though she's a bit confused right now as to what she wants with PAUL. After two rings, she picks up the telephone. During the following phone conversation between ROBIN and PAUL, the CAMERA should either cut back and forth between the two locations or use split screen.

ROBIN
(into phone)
Reception.

PAUL
(into phone)
Hey, Robin. It's Paul.

ROBIN
(a bit uncomfortable)
...Hi.

There is a moment of silence, and PAUL appears to be a bit awkward.

PAUL
...Uh...I haven't spoken to you in a week...What's been going on?

ROBIN
(not sounding thrilled)
Not too much...

PAUL
How's work?

ROBIN
The same.

PAUL
(hesitates for a moment)
...Are you free for dinner one of the next few nights?

ROBIN looks a bit uncomfortable and does not answer immediately.

ROBIN
...Look, Paul. I thought we agreed that it would be best to have some time apart.

PAUL
I know, but I haven't spoken to you in a week.

ROBIN
Well, I still need more time.

PAUL looks very uneasy. He doesn't know what to say next, but he doesn't want to get off the phone on a bad note.

PAUL
(floundering)
...I...uh...finally moved into the new place...unpacked...the cable guy came...
(ponders for a moment)
...I actually was thinking about getting all those movie stations... You know, HBO, Disney, all that...

ROBIN
You?

PAUL
Sure...why not. I know you love movies...you're in the business... I mean, there's no pressure on you to come over or anything...But it's here for you.

ROBIN
That's sweet, but I don't need it. I'm happy renting videos.

PAUL
(thinks about this for a moment)
But what happens if it's midnight and the video stores are closed? ...Or you're sick in bed and can't make it to the video store? ...Or what if you just feel like being spontaneous?

ROBIN looks a bit surprised.

ROBIN
Okay...Okay...You win...Listen, I'd love to have all those stations.

PAUL
You would?

ROBIN
Sure. I just can't afford them right now. I didn't think you could either.

PAUL thinks about this for a moment.

PAUL
Well...I think I may be able to swing it.

Several people approach ROBIN at the reception desk.

ROBIN
(quickly)
Well, it sounds good...Anyway, I'll talk to you soon.

PAUL
Okay. Bye.

PAUL hangs up the phone. After he does this, he pauses for a moment, and we can see that he's thinking.

CUT TO:

INT. MAILROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

The clock on the wall reads 4:59. The mailroom employees are still present. PAUL is putting his suit jacket on, closing his briefcase, and has his car keys in hand. At this moment, a nice-looking, well-dressed executive in his late-forties walks in. He looks around the mailroom and his eyes meet PAUL'S first.

ASHLEY
(to PAUL)
You...I need some help. My secretary left early and I've got to put a few manuscripts together to be Fed-Ex'd tonight.

The MALE EXECUTIVE quickly leaves the mailroom. PAUL rolls his eyes, takes off his jacket, puts down his briefcase, and places his keys on top of it. He then walks out of the mailroom to follow the executive.

CUT TO:

INT. MAILROOM - LATE AFTERNOON/EARLY EVENING

The mailroom is empty. PAUL quickly walks in and grabs his jacket, briefcase, and keys from the same place he left them. He briefly glances at the clock on the wall, which now reads 6:20. He rushes out.

CUT TO:

EXT. PAUL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - EARLY EVENING

PAUL is clearly running late. He speeds by his building and pulls up to the gate of the indoor parking lot. He is driving a 1989 Nissan 240 SX.

CUT TO:

INT. INDOOR PARKING LOT - EARLY EVENING

PAUL'S car is just entering the parking lot. As he drives through, something catches his attention, and he looks. There is a CLOSE-UP of a "Loading Zone" parking spot, which a pick-up truck is parked in. The pick-up truck has "Friendly Cable" logos all over it. There is also a CLOSE-UP of the Loading Zone sign, which reads "FIVE MINUTES ONLY" in big letters. PAUL reacts by taking a deep breath. He is tense. He continues driving.

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY OF PAUL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - EARLY EVENING

The door from the parking lot swings open and PAUL rushes into the lobby. He goes to the elevator and pushes the "up" button. As he does this, a little old lady appears. She's walking from the front door entrance of the lobby towards the elevators. She is carrying several bags of groceries and is struggling badly.

OLD LADY
(in pain)
...Oh...my back...I had to park a block away on the street because that goddamn cable truck is parked in the loading zone...Son-of-a-bitch...I'd like to get my hands on that mother-fucker.

PAUL looks especially uncomfortable.

OLD LADY
(continuing)
What the hell is a cable truck doing here at 6:30 at night? ...Oh, I guess it doesn't surprise me. These assholes say they're going to be here between 8:00 and 5:00, but you know what they really do? The cocksuckers make one appointment per day, spend the morning and afternoon jerking off, then show up now!

PAUL
(unsure what to say)
...Do you need any help with anything?

OLD LADY
Just push the fucking elevator button when it gets here.

The elevator arrives. They both get in.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY OF PAUL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - EARLY EVENING

PAUL hurries away from the elevator and is walking at a fast pace down the hall towards his apartment. The hall is one of those outdoor halls with an atrium. As he's walking, we hear rock music coming from one of the apartments. It gets louder as he approaches. The sound suddenly changes to dramatic sports commentary from a boxing match. The announcer sounds like Howard Cossell.

TV SPORTS ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
...And Ali is down for the count.
I don't believe what I'm seeing...
One...Two...Three...

As PAUL approaches, the sound continues to get louder. Suddenly, the sound changes again, and we hear a different announcer's voice.

TV ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
We only have 18 more of these cubic zirconia's to sell...I swear these things are selling for eleven hundred at department stores...But here, they're $49.95...

The sound changes again. Next, we hear a very pleasant male voice.

ANOTHER TV ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
"Tonight on Larry King Live: Bob Denver from Gilligan's Island."

Finally, PAUL arrives at his apartment, and it is clear that the sounds have been coming from a loud television inside his unit. The sound has changed back to a loud Rock N'Roll concert. PAUL places his key in the lock and turns it, but the door is double bolted and it won't open. He appears angry. He knocks on the door, but the music is still very loud. He reaches to ring the doorbell. Just before he rings it, the tv volume is turned down. PAUL then rings the doorbell. Instead of his old doorbell, we hear the theme to The Godfather. A moment later, the door is opened by the CABLE GUY.

CABLE GUY
You're late.

PAUL
(mad and in shock)
What happened to my doorbell?

CABLE GUY
I told you I'd change it for you. We'll talk price later...

PAUL enters his apartment.

CUT TO:

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - EARLY EVENING

PAUL has just entered his apartment and closed the front door. PAUL looks at the tv and sees that there is a rock concert on the screen. The CABLE GUY is holding the remote control to the tv, and he turns the volume a bit louder.

CABLE GUY
Check it out: Cyndi Lauper - The Central Park Concert...

The CABLE GUY bounces his head a bit to the beat of the music. PAUL appears to be a nervous wreck. He looks around the room like he just walked in and found his house had been burglarized.

PAUL
How did you get in here?

While still watching tv, the CABLE GUY hands PAUL a business card. There is a CLOSE-UP of the business card. On the card is the caricature of a good-looking man's chiseled face and the business name "Handsome Locksmith." Under the business name is the company slogan: "When you really want 'in'."

CABLE GUY
(modestly)
It's just something I do on the side...you know, during a dry period.

PAUL
You broke in here.

CABLE GUY
Of course I did. You were late.

The CABLE GUY aims the remote control at the tv and starts changing channels.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
Look at this...You've got everything now: HBO, Showtime, the Movie Channel, Cinemax...Even Disney...Look:

The tv channel is changed to another channel where kindergarten aged kids wearing Mouseketeer hats are wildly chasing an old lady around a sofa.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
Is this great? Look at those little cuties...I can't wait to have a little squirt of my own someday...How about you?

PAUL
(not warmly)
Can we talk for a minute?

The CABLE GUY is still watching tv, thoroughly enjoying it, and paying no attention to PAUL.

CABLE GUY
You want to see something really weird?

The CABLE GUY changes the channel.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
On MTV, there's a Tony Bennett video...

He changes the channel again.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
...And on PBS, they're showing Woodstock....Man, the cultural crossover is mind-boggling.

The CABLE GUY shakes his head in a way which indicates that he'll never figure the world out.

PAUL
Look, I don't know if this is such a good idea...

The CABLE GUY now turns his attention to PAUL.

CABLE GUY
What's not a good idea? It's already done. We just have to decide on the drop point for the money.

PAUL looks very uneasy. He's not sure if he should take the stations or not.

PAUL
Well...If we're gonna do this, I think I'd rather just pay you up front...So we can take care of it all at once.

CABLE GUY
(suddenly insulted)
Why? You don't want to meet with me anymore? What is this, wham-bam thank you, ma'am?

PAUL
(surprised)
Well, I....

CABLE GUY
(interrupting)
You think I do this for just anyone? I don't. This is something I'd only do for a friend.

PAUL
Well, I appreciate....

CABLE GUY
(interrupting again)
Do you consider me a friend?

PAUL
I barely know you.

CABLE GUY
Come on, you know what I mean... For example, if you had an extra ticket to see Streisand, would you take me? ...Assuming you didn't have a chick...

PAUL
(trying to picture this)
You and me...at a Barbra Streisand concert?

CABLE GUY
Sure. I'd be singing along to everything.

PAUL
(very hesitant)
I'd have to think about it.

CABLE GUY
What's to think about? We'd take the cable truck; I'd pick you up at 6:00; We'd grab a few slices of pizza...And then it's Yentl City... So, what do you say? Would you take me?

PAUL
(not wanting to lie)
Look...what difference does it make?

CABLE GUY
It makes all the difference. If I didn't think you'd take me, I'd pull all your stations right now. ...So would you? Would you take me?

PAUL thinks about this for a moment. He's trying to figure out a way not to lie, but to still keep the stations.

PAUL
(painfully, and choosing his words very carefully)
...In the rare event and million-to-one situation of me having not just one ticket to see Barbra Streisand but having two... And with absolutely no women to take whatsoever...I would consider taking you out of gratitude for giving me all of the stations.

PAUL thinks about this a bit more.

PAUL
(continuing)
...As a matter of fact, instead of inviting you, I'd probably just give you both tickets.

CABLE GUY
(thinks about this for a moment)
That's really nice of you.
(pause)
You are a good friend.

The CABLE GUY looks around the room. His eyes stop at an empty vase sitting on an entry table next to the front door. He walks over to it and looks inside.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
Okay, this is perfect...This will be the drop point. Everytime you watch something, put the money in here and I'll pick it up.

PAUL
(in disbelief)
In that vase? Inside this apartment? What are you going to do, break-in everytime to pick it up?

CABLE GUY
Sure. It's more convenient that way...I mean, who knows when you're gonna be home. Today, I waited ninety minutes for you... I missed Happy Hour at The Red Taquito.

PAUL walks to the front door and opens it. He looks outside and sees a large potted plant in the outdoor hallway, which is between his apartment and the one next door.

PAUL
How about this plant? I'll put the the money in this.

The CABLE GUY walks over to the front door and looks outside.

CABLE GUY
Are you crazy? Out there? That plant is in the "common area." Anyone could take it...The gardener could water it.

PAUL
If anything happens to it, I'll be responsible.

CABLE GUY
(a bit reluctant)
...Well...Okay...it's a deal.

The CABLE GUY extends his hand to PAUL, and they shake hands. PAUL has the same expression on his face that Yitzak Rabin had when he was forced to shake hands with Yassar Arafat at the White House.

CUT TO:

INT. MAILROOM AT SPRINGHOUSE PUBLISHING - MORNING

The mailroom doesn't appear to be busy. PAUL picks up the telephone on HARRY'S desk and dials a phone number. We hear an answering machine pick up the phone. It is a recording of PAUL'S voice.

PAUL'S VOICE (O.S.)
Hi. This is Paul. I'm sorry I can't come to the phone...

PAUL presses his three-digit access code. A computer voice responds.

COMPUTER VOICE (O.S.)
You have one message.

There are several beeps heard, then we hear the voice of the CABLE GUY.

CABLE GUY (O.S.)
Hey, Paul...It's me, the CABLE GUY. Tonight on the USA network is Wrestling. I've got a big screen over at my place and a few other cable guys are coming over. Call me: 555-1140

PAUL'S face grimaces.

CUT TO:

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

PAUL walks in through the front door and puts his briefcase down. He walks over to his answering machine on the kitchen counter. He presses a button. The CABLE GUY'S voice is heard.

CABLE GUY (O.S.)
Hey Paul, it's me again--About the Wrestling tonight...I'm running a little low on ice...Could you pick some up?...Also, if you go by the market to get the ice, would you grab me some cereal, like Rice Krispies or something? Thanks.

PAUL shakes his head back and forth in amazement.

CUT TO:

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

Just like in the last scene, PAUL walks in through the front door and puts his briefcase and keys down. However, he's wearing a different suit, which makes it clear that it's a different day than the last scene. Again, he walks over to his answering machine on the kitchen counter. He presses a button. Again, the CABLE GUY'S voice is heard.

CABLE GUY (O.S.)
Hey, Paul...It's me, the CABLE GUY. We missed you last night. Wrestling was great...And after that, we watched a video about Stewardesses...Give me a call: 555-1140.

PAUL again shakes his head back and forth in disbelief.

CUT TO:

EXT. COLOSSAL ENTERTAINMENT BUILDING - NOON

PAUL is about to enter the front door of the building. It is a nice, new building, typical of a young and successful mid-sized entertainment production and distribution company.

CUT TO:

INT. COLOSSAL ENTERTAINMENT LOBBY - NOON

The lobby is the same that we saw earlier when ROBIN was on the telephone. PAUL walks through the lobby and up to the reception desk at the back of the lobby. ROBIN is sitting behind the reception desk but is turned around glancing at something else. When she turns around again and sees PAUL, she looks surprised. After a moment, the surprise wears off, but her guard still appears to be up.

ROBIN
What are you doing here?

PAUL
(trying to be casual)
It's lunchtime...I was in the neighborhood...

PAUL casually glances around the lobby.

PAUL
(continuing)
...Actually, I was looking through the tv guide today and I was thinking: Isn't Love In The Afternoon your all-time favorite movie?

PAUL has hit her soft spot. She hesitates for a moment.

ROBIN
...Yes.

PAUL
Well, I just happened to notice that it's on Showtime tonight at 9:00.

ROBIN appears to drop her guard a bit.

ROBIN
...God, I haven't seen that movie in years...Gary Cooper, Audrey Hepburn, and Maurice Chevalier... And the whole movie takes place in Paris.

PAUL
(not sure how to say this)
...Well...I know you said we shouldn't see each other for a while...and I respect that...But if you wanted to see the movie... I swear, we wouldn't have to talk or anything...

There is a moment of silence.

PAUL
(continuing, floundering)
I mean, if I want to see the movie and you want to see the movie... Why not see it together?

There is another brief pause. ROBIN still looks unsure.

PAUL
(floundering with all he has left)
...It just seems so silly to avoid someone you've shared so much with...

There is one last pause. ROBIN'S face warms up a tiny bit.

ROBIN
(hesitatingly giving in)
...Okay...I'll come over and see it with you...But let's just watch the movie, okay? I don't want to get into a whole discussion about us.

PAUL
I promise...

A woman in her mid-forties and dressed in a business-suit appears. She is walking down the hall towards ROBIN. From the expression on ROBIN'S face, it looks like the woman is her supervisor. ROBIN gives PAUL a look which indicates that he should leave. PAUL gets the message.

PAUL
Bye.

CUT TO:

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

PAUL is standing in front of his entertainment center, looking at the framed pictures of he and ROBIN. There is a knock at the front door. PAUL takes a deep breath, then walks to the door and opens it. ROBIN is standing in the doorway. She's wearing jeans, a sweatshirt, tennis shoes, and she looks great.

ROBIN
Hi. What happened to your doorbell?

There is a CLOSE-UP of PAUL'S doorbell on the wall outside of his front door. However, there is now a small piece of paper covering the doorbell. The piece of paper has writing on it, saying "Out Of Order."

PAUL
Oh...it's not working. I'm having someone look at it this week.

ROBIN
Well, what happens when you push it?

She reaches to push it. He tries to stop her, but it's too late. The first few bars of The Godfather Theme are heard.

ROBIN
(continuing, unsure how to react)
What is that?

PAUL
(uncomfortably)
...It's the...uh...Theme to The Godfather...Someone played a stupid joke on me...

ROBIN
(not getting the joke)
Oh...

PAUL
(awkwardly)
...Uh...Please, come in.

ROBIN enters. She looks around as she walks in. It is obvious that PAUL has cleaned up the place, and it looks completely moved into.

ROBIN
This is nice.

The pictures in the entertainment center that PAUL had been looking at have caught ROBIN'S eye. She walks over to them and looks. Her back is to PAUL, so he can't see her face. However, her face is visible to the audience. We can see that the pictures bring back a lot of great memories to her, and that she's still vulnerable to PAUL...but it's clear that she doesn't want PAUL to see this. There is a brief moment of silence as she looks.

PAUL
...Do you still have our pictures up at your place?

ROBIN
(still looking at the pictures, but not letting her guard down)
Some of them...But it's not like my dorm back at Madison...That was college.

There is another brief moment of silence. She is now looking at other items in the entertainment center.

PAUL
...You know, some people marry their college sweethearts...Some even marry their high school sweethearts...

She turns around and faces him.

ROBIN
(warmly)
Look, Paul...When I get married, I just want to be 100% sure... Doesn't the idea scare you of marrying the first person you've had a serious relationship with?

PAUL
No...not when it's you.

From the expression on ROBIN'S face, it's clear that she doesn't want to have this conversation.

ROBIN
...Anyway, I thought you promised that we weren't going to get into this.

PAUL
(realizing what he started)
...I'm sorry.
(trying to change the mood)
...Come on, we're about to see a great movie that's starting in exactly...
(looks at his watch)
...nine minutes. How about something to drink?

ROBIN
(pleased by the changed conversation)
Great. How about a Diet-Coke?

PAUL
Fine.

ROBIN sits down on the couch facing the television. PAUL starts to walk towards the kitchen, but sees that she's being left unentertained. He turns around and walks back to where she's sitting. He stops at the coffee table in front of her, bends over, and picks up the remote control to the television.

PAUL
We may as well put this on now.

PAUL aims the remote control at the tv and presses a button. The tv goes on but there is nothing but snow and static on the screen. PAUL looks down at the remote, then presses another button. Again, nothing but snow and static. He starts flipping through all of the stations in numerical order, but they're all the same. There is a CLOSE-UP of PAUL'S face. He is completely frozen. He had wanted this night to be special, but he's afraid it might be a disaster. He tries to maintain his composure.

PAUL
(disappointed)
I don't believe it...The cable is out.

ROBIN
(also disappointed)
Oh, no.

PAUL
I don't understand it. It's been great all week...

ROBIN
Do you think it's just yours, or do you think it's out in the whole building?

PAUL
(thinking)
...I don't know. That's a good question.

PAUL looks at his watch again.

PAUL
(continuing)
It's still early. Maybe I'll check next door and see if my neighbor's is out, too...I'll be right back.

ROBIN stays seated on the couch. PAUL quickly goes to the front door, opens it, and steps outside.

CUT TO:

INT. OUTDOOR HALLWAY OF PAUL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - EVENING

PAUL has just walked out of his front door, and he closes it behind him. When he turns to face the dimly lit outdoor hallway, he jumps in the air out of fear. The CAMERA shows a CLOSE-UP of the CABLE GUY standing just to the side of PAUL's front door. He is holding a piece of cut cable in his hand.

PAUL
(whispering)
Jesus Christ! You scared the hell out of me.

PAUL sighs and tries to regain his composure.

CABLE GUY
You missing something?

The CABLE GUY holds up the piece of cut cable.

PAUL
Is that mine? Why did you do that?

CABLE GUY
(not whispering)
Why didn't you call me back?

PAUL suddenly looks nervous.

PAUL
Sshh...Keep your voice down.

CABLE GUY
Okay...Come here.

The CABLE GUY points to an "Exit" sign above a doorway which is 10 feet away from where they're standing. The CABLE GUY walks towards the door and puts the cut cable in his pants pocket. PAUL looks frustrated, takes a deep breath and follows him. The CABLE GUY opens the door and enters. PAUL follows him inside. The door closes behind them.

CUT TO:

INT. STAIRWAY - EVENING

PAUL and the CABLE GUY are now in the dimly lit stairway that we just saw them enter.

PAUL
(not quite whispering, but not at full voice either)
Do you mind telling me the reason you cut my cable?

CABLE GUY
The reason? Two words: Barbra Streisand.
(pause)
...We had a deal.

PAUL
(frustrated)
What are you talking about? I don't have Streisand tickets.

CABLE GUY
Maybe not...But if you did, you wouldn't have taken me...You wouldn't even return my phone calls.

PAUL
Look, I'm sorry about that...But I wasn't in the mood to watch Wrestling a few nights ago...And last night when you called...what was it you wanted to do, again? Break into the Waterslide Park at midnight?

CABLE GUY
(pausing to remember)
It would have been a blast...
(snaps out of it)
But that isn't the point. Friendship isn't about doing what only you want to do...It's give and take. And you just want to take the entertainment I provide, without giving in return.

PAUL
(angry)
Without giving in return? What are you talking about? You're charging me. I'm supposed to fill a plant with money every time I watch television.

CABLE GUY
Come on...I wasn't really going to take your money...But even if I had, I'd have used it to grow a tree in Israel or something.
(pause)
...By the way, who's the tomato you've got at your place?

PAUL
(still angry)
What are you, stalking me?

CABLE GUY
No...I happened to come by to chew you out at the same time your little guest arrived. I figured you'd be showing her a little cable to get her in the sack... Love In The Afternoon, am I right?

PAUL
(offended)
No, you're not right...I mean, yes, we were going to watch Love In The Afternoon, but I was not trying to get her in the sack. I love this girl.

CABLE GUY
It's a shame...
(pause)
...That you can't see the movie, I mean. Oh well...Try listening to the radio. That's how my old man got my old lady in the sack the first time...

The CABLE GUY puts his hand on the doorknob and turns it, as if he's leaving.

PAUL
(frustrated)
...Wait. Can't we just work this out?

The CABLE GUY takes his hand off the doorknob. He then folds his arms and points his face upward like a primadonna. He is not looking at PAUL in the face, but he has an expression on his own face which indicates that he's listening.

PAUL
(continuing, a bit more friendly)
Look...I'm sorry I didn't call you back. It was wrong of me. The next time you call, I will call you back...Okay?

The CABLE GUY does not react to this, and PAUL looks like he doesn't know what to say.

PAUL
(continuing)
Come on...What do you want?

The CABLE GUY now looks at PAUL in the eye.

CABLE GUY
(hurt)
Do you know that you've never <u>once</u> asked me what my name is... Whenever I come by, you probably tell your friends, "The Cable Guy was here" or "The Cable Guy did so-and-so..."
(pause)
...You never tell anyone "<u>Craig Swank</u> was here" or "<u>Craig Swank</u> did so-and-so..." And that's who I really am: <u>Craig Swank</u>.

PAUL
(trying to be sensitive)
Okay...Okay...You want me to start calling you "Craig"?

The CABLE GUY shrugs his shoulders.

CABLE GUY
...It would be nice.

PAUL
Okay then.
(he pauses considerately)
Is there anything else...<u>Craig</u>?

The CABLE GUY thinks for a moment.

CABLE GUY
Tomorrow night.

PAUL
What about it?

CABLE GUY
You meet me for drinks tomorrow night. I'll pick you up in front of this building at 10:00.

PAUL must make a quick decision. He realizes that he's got to say "yes" if he wants to see the movie tonight.

PAUL
(giving in)
Okay...Okay...

PAUL looks down at his watch.

PAUL
(continuing)
Wait...It's two minutes to 9:00... How are you gonna put that back together in two minutes?

PAUL gestures to the cut cable in the CABLE GUY'S pocket. The CABLE GUY then pulls it out of his pocket and holds it up.

CABLE GUY
...Oh, you mean this?

PAUL nods "yes."

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
Oh, this is nothing. This is just scrap cable. I use it for dramatic effect...Kind of like in The Godfather when the producer wakes up with the horse's head in his bed...Your cable is just unscrewed from the wall. It'll only take ten seconds.

The CABLE GUY reaches to the metal cable box on the wall in the stairway. The cable box is only about five feet away from where they've been standing. The CABLE GUY opens the metal box. There are lots of cables inside with one specific cord that is plainly unscrewed. The CABLE GUY screws it back in.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOORWAY OF PAUL'S APARTMENT - LATE EVENING

PAUL is standing in the doorway with ROBIN. ROBIN looks very relaxed and happy. She is clearly more vulnerable than we have seen her before.

ROBIN
Wasn't that a great movie? Gary Cooper was so romantic...the way he had the four violinists following him everywhere...

PAUL
But he was always with a different woman...You wouldn't want that.

ROBIN
Well, not that part...But after he met Audrey Hepburn, he didn't want to be with anyone else...That's how he knew it was true love.

There is a pause for a moment. PAUL wants to say something, but he hesitates for fear of violating their agreement not to talk about their relationship.

PAUL
...You think that's true love? For the past four months, I haven't even thought of anyone except you. I don't go to bars; I don't go to clubs; I haven't been on one date...And not because I don't have the opportunity, but because I don't have the desire. As a matter of fact, I don't have the desire to go out, period.
(pause)
...The other night when I met Mark for an early dinner, it was my first night out in two months.

ROBIN
(a bit touched)
...You don't need to do that...It's healthy to go out.

PAUL
Maybe for you it is...But for me, it just doesn't feel right...
(takes a breath)
...So if there's even a slim chance that we'll get back together, I'd rather live my life this way.

ROBIN is clearly moved by him. She looks in his eyes and gives him a short sweet kiss on the lips. As much as she is feeling at this moment, she doesn't want things to go any further, so she breaks from the kiss prematurely. Smiling, she turns and starts to walk away.

ROBIN
Goodnight.

PAUL watches her go and we can see the love in his eyes.

PAUL
(quietly)
Goodnight.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:
EXT. PAUL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - EVENING

PAUL is standing on the sidewalk in front of his apartment building. It is dark outside, but the street is well-lit. PAUL is casually dressed, wearing a pair of jeans and a sweater. He is dressed differently than in the last scene, which indicates that it's a different night. The street is fairly quiet. Suddenly, the screech of car tires is heard. A pair of headlights appears and is heading down the street towards PAUL'S building. In a moment, the car arrives and stops in front of PAUL. It is the Friendly Cable truck. The CABLE GUY is in the driver's seat, and a large Saint Bernard dog appears to be in the front passenger seat. The truck is only a two-seater with no back-seat. PAUL approaches the passenger side window and looks at the dog, whose name is HEF.

CABLE GUY
(to PAUL)
How you doin'...Sorry, I'm late, but Hef here was in a bad mood.

The CABLE GUY affectionately pats HEF, the St. Bernard, on the head.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
My landlord said Hef couldn't swim in the pool anymore. Can you believe that? It's so unfair... The landlord's kids are the ones who pee in the pool...Hef has never pee'd in the pool.

The CABLE GUY pats HEF on the head again.

CABLE GUY
(continuing, opening up a bit)
Okay...Once, in the jacuzzi, HEF'S bowels relaxed a little...But that was because of the heat... HEF was so embarrassed.

There is a CLOSE-UP of HEF. His tongue is warmly hanging out of his mouth and he appears to be happy. PAUL looks inside at him.

PAUL
Is he coming out with us?

CABLE GUY
No...I'm just dropping him off at a friend's.

PAUL
Why didn't you drop him off at your friend's first?

CABLE GUY
What...You don't like dogs? I wanted you to meet him.

PAUL clearly looks uncomfortable.

PAUL
It's not that. There's just no place for me to sit.

CABLE GUY
There's more room than you think. Open the door.

PAUL reluctantly opens the door. The dog jumps out immediately and jumps on PAUL, knocking PAUL down on the ground, flat on his back. The dog is wildly licking PAUL's face.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
That's it, Boy! Give him some lovin'!

PAUL is on the ground covering his face.

CABLE GUY
(continuing, to PAUL)
Hey, stop trying to block Hef from licking you. He doesn't like that. ...Didn't anyone ever tell you that a dog's tongue is like medicine?

HEF is still getting the best of PAUL on the ground.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
Alright...Alright...That's enough. We've got to get going.

HEF sits up and stops paying attention to PAUL. PAUL slowly gets up from the ground and stands. He looks completely disheveled, almost as if he's been in a fight.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
Come on. Get in the truck already.

Reluctantly, PAUL gets in and sits in the passenger seat. He gets comfortable for about one second. HEF immediately jumps in on top of PAUL. PAUL lets out a loud groan, because the wind has just been knocked out of him. PAUL is now scrunched in and very uncomfortable.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - EVENING

The Friendly Cable truck is pulled over and parked next to the sidewalk on another residential street. Only PAUL and the CABLE GUY are now in the truck. The CABLE GUY'S window is rolled down, and the CABLE GUY'S head is sticking out. There is a quick shot of HEF standing outside the closed front door of a house.

CABLE GUY
(very firmly)
...You be good now. Don't give Jerry any trouble...
(pause)
And don't hump his leg either!

The front door of the house opens, and HEF immediately runs inside. The CABLE GUY pulls his head back inside the passenger compartment and starts to drive away. It appears that he's a bit choked up.

CABLE GUY
(emotionally)
That's one special little friend. God, I love him...Named him after my favorite human: Hugh Hefner.

PAUL
Hugh Hefner is your favorite human?

CABLE GUY
Of course.

PAUL
Do you know him or something?

CABLE GUY
I met him once at the Mansion... I crashed a party there...He personally caught me in the kitchen making an ice cream sundae...Didn't even throw me out.

PAUL appears to be unimpressed and is looking out his passenger side window.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
...Haven't you noticed that of all the stations I've given you...HBO, Cinemax, Showtime, Disney...I've never offered you the PLAYBOY Channel...I just can't do it. I've got too much respect for the man.

PAUL still doesn't say anything, and it's clear that he's having a rotten time. They both go back to watching the road for a few moments. PAUL then turns back to him.

PAUL
Where are we going, anyway?

CABLE GUY
A great little place called Clay's.

PAUL
(suddenly upset)
Clay's in Santa Monica?

CABLE GUY
That's the one.

PAUL
Would you mind if we went somewhere else?

CABLE GUY
No chance. I've been in the mood for Clay's potato skins all day.

PAUL
...Please. That place is only one block away from where my ex-girlfriend lives. She goes there all the time...I'd rather not run into her.

CABLE GUY
Why? You ashamed of me?

PAUL
No. It has nothing to do with you...It's just that when I saw her last night, things went really well...And I told her that I don't go out at all...So how would it look if she saw me drinking with you?

The CABLE GUY ponders this thought for a moment, and it appears that he may be willing to bend a bit.

CABLE GUY
...Listen, I'd like to help you out...I'd even give up the potato skins for buffalo wings someplace else...But it sounds like you need to break free...You know, get out of the womb.

PAUL
(pleading)
No. It really isn't like that.
(very sincere and vulnerable)
Could you please just do me this one little favor?

CABLE GUY
(matter-of-factly)
No.
(a bit warmer)
Look...I'm not trying to be a hard ass, but I already told a few friends that I'd be here. I can't lie to a friend...You'll appreciate that about me someday.

PAUL looks frustrated.

CUT TO:

EXT. CLAY'S RESTAURANT/BAR - EVENING

Clay's looks like a pretty "in" place. There is a valet parking zone in front. Two eager valets are standing in front waiting for cars to arrive. The Friendly Cable truck pulls into the valet zone in front. Needless to say, the cable truck looks like a fish-out-of-water.

CUT TO:

INT. FRIENDLY CABLE TRUCK - EVENING

The CABLE GUY turns off the ignition. A young parking valet has approached the driver's side door. The CABLE GUY reaches into his pocket, pulls something out, then turns to PAUL.

CABLE GUY
(to PAUL)
Breath mint?

PAUL just looks at him. He is not happy about being here.

CUT TO:

INT. CLAY'S RESTAURANT/BAR - EVENING

Like the bar seen earlier in scene #2, this is a very lively place. There are a lot of nice-looking young people in their twenties and thirties. The CABLE GUY and PAUL are sitting at a booth in the bar area. An attractive waitress stops at their table and places a plate of potato skins in front of the CABLE GUY. PAUL doesn't notice. Instead, PAUL looks at his sweater. There is a CLOSE-UP of the sweater, and it is covered with dog fur. PAUL begins to pick the fur off. The CABLE GUY sees this.

CABLE GUY
It looks fine. Women love animals.
(looks at his plate)
You want a skin?

PAUL
(not very friendly)
No thanks.

CABLE GUY
Relax...They won't give you bad breath...I told you: I've got mints.

The CABLE GUY pulls out a pack of tic-tacs from his pocket and shakes them in PAUL's face. PAUL doesn't respond. The CABLE GUY is starting to realize that PAUL is not "into" their evening together and that PAUL is only there to fulfill their agreement from last night.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
Hey, wait a minute...You gotta do more than just show up. Don't act like you're in a dentist's chair.

PAUL
I'm sorry...But I told you that I'm a little uncomfortable here.

CABLE GUY
Why? Because of that little chicky-chicky last night? I've got news for you: If Love In The Afternoon didn't get her back, nothing will. You gotta start living your life again...You want a drink?

PAUL
No thanks.

CABLE GUY
Well, you have no choice: That was part of the agreement. You had to have a drink with me.

The CABLE GUY motions to the waitress who is passing by. She stops.

CABLE GUY
(continuing, to waitress)
Bring us two beers and two shots of JD.

PAUL
I'm not doing shots.

CABLE GUY
(to waitress)
Yes he will...He already promised.

The waitress walks away. The CABLE GUY looks towards the entrance of the bar and starts waving his arms wildly.

CABLE GUY
(continuing, calling out loudly)
Foxes!

In a few moments, GINGER, the incredibly sexy blonde seen earlier at Backstreet in scene #2, arrives at the booth with another very sexy young woman. The other young woman is a brunette named DAPHNE. They are both dressed in a very "hot" way and border on looking cheap. However, there is no denying that they are both very attractive.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
Sit down...Sit down. Paul, you know Ginger, and her friend here is Daphne.

Before PAUL can answer, the two women have moved into the booth. PAUL and the CABLE GUY are on the inside of the booth, while the two women each sit on the outside. GINGER sits next to the CABLE GUY, and DAPHNE sits next to PAUL. The CABLE GUY calls out to the waitress at the bar.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
Hey! Make it four of everything!

The waitress looks at the CABLE GUY and nods.

CABLE GUY
(continuing, to DAPHNE)
Paul, here, is on the partnership track over at Springhouse Publishing...

DAPHNE
(to PAUL, impressed)
Really?

PAUL
Not exactly...I'm only in the mailroom. Besides, they don't make people partners in the publishing business. You get promoted to an assistant editor.

The waitress comes by the table and drops off all of the drinks. The CABLE GUY picks up his beer glass, raises it, and makes a toast.

CABLE GUY
To Paul: The future assistant editor at Springhouse.

The two girls pick up their glasses, raise them and drink. PAUL looks awkward. He reluctantly raises his glass and takes a sip.

DAPHNE
(to PAUL)
Come on. You're gonna have to drink more than that if I'm gonna get you drunk.

DAPHNE squeezes PAUL'S thigh under the table, and he reacts with an uncomfortable expression. The CABLE GUY turns to PAUL and whispers in his ear.

CABLE GUY
(whispering)
Daphne likes you. I can tell. You'll have her tonight.

PAUL whispers back to the CABLE GUY.

PAUL
(whispering)
I'm not interested. I already told you...

PAUL is interrupted by DAPHNE putting her arms around his neck.

DAPHNE
(in a sexy voice)
I love secrets...I want to hear.

Suddenly, DAPHNE looks up to the front of the booth. Her arms are still around PAUL'S neck. PAUL then looks to the front of the booth, too. Standing there is ROBIN, who is with a girlfriend standing behind her.

ROBIN
(very sarcastically)
Oh, hi Paul. How are you? You look so upset. Maybe that's because you're at a bar...And I know you never go to bars...You never go on dates...You never go out period...

She turns away from the table, about to walk away, then turns back and looks at the glasses on the table.

ROBIN
(continuing)
Oh, by the way, what kind of shots are you guys doing, Paul? I didn't know you did shots.

ROBIN turns and walks away. Her friend follows her. PAUL tries to get up from the table, but he is sandwiched between the CABLE GUY and DAPHNE.

PAUL
(upset)
Great...This is just great...
(to DAPHNE)
You'll have to excuse me for a minute.

Reluctantly, DAPHNE gets up and PAUL is able to get out of the booth. He immediately heads for the front door.

EXT. CLAY'S RESTAURANT/BAR - EVENING

PAUL runs out the front door and is now outside on the sidewalk. He looks down the street and sees ROBIN and her friend walking. He runs up to them and is out of breath.

PAUL
Robin...Can I talk to you?

ROBIN
For what? Your date is waiting for you.

PAUL
She was not my date. She's a friend of the other girl who was sitting with us.

ROBIN
And who was the other girl with?

PAUL
The guy who was there.

ROBIN
(not believing this)
Oh, so the blonde was with the other guy...And the girl who had her arms around you was with the blonde?

PAUL
(realizing the way this sounds)
Well...yeah...I know it doesn't sound right, but it's true.

ROBIN stops walking for a moment and looks at PAUL.

ROBIN
Look Paul...I know we're not back together...So you can go on dates... You can go to bars...You can do anything you want to. It's just that after you said all those things to me last night, I believed you...

PAUL
(very upset)
Those things were true...I swear. This was not what it looked like.

ROBIN
(still upset)
I'll talk to you later, Paul...

ROBIN walks quickly away again. PAUL just stands there watching her walk away and looking helpless.

CUT TO:

INT. CLAY'S RESTAURANT/BAR - EVENING

PAUL walks back in looking dejected. The CABLE GUY, GINGER, and DAPHNE are still sitting at the table. PAUL slowly approaches.

PAUL
(to CABLE GUY)
I need to go home.

CABLE GUY
Sit down. Relax. You look like Bogart in Casablanca right after Ingrid Bergman got on the plane.

PAUL
(more forcefully)
Can you just take me home, please?

CABLE GUY
You're gonna let her do that to you? Wherever you are, whatever you're doing, no matter how good a time you're having...She walks in and you gotta go home?

PAUL
I don't want to get into this with you...

CABLE GUY
Why? Because you don't think I understand? I'll tell you what: I'll spell things out for you right now, and if I'm wrong, I'll take you home. Fair enough?

PAUL doesn't respond.

CABLE GUY
(more forcefully)
Fair enough?

PAUL
(reluctantly)
Okay.

CABLE GUY
Alright, then...Sit down.

PAUL reluctantly sits.

INT. CLAY'S RESTAURANT/BAR - EVENING

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PAUL doesn't respond.

CABLE GUY
(more forcefully)
Fair enough?

PAUL
(reluctantly)
Okay.

CABLE GUY
Alright, then...Sit down.

PAUL reluctantly sits.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
...This chick was your college sweetheart...She was probably your first lay, which is very emotional...I know I cried my first time...

The CABLE GUY emotionally shakes his head for a moment, remembering.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
...Anyway, you two were inseparable during college, probably spent every night in each other's dorm room...You had the same friends, the same classes, the same interests...But then you both graduated.

The CABLE GUY has been telling the story in such an engaging way that GINGER and DAPHNE are fixated to him.

GINGER
(on the edge of her seat)
What happened next?

CABLE GUY
(matter-of-factly)
Very simple: They moved out here, but it's not the same...They don't have the same classes anymore; They don't have the same friends anymore...And the malt shop out here only has twelve year old kids and people with blue hair...

The CABLE GUY takes a sip of his beer.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
Plus, they're both struggling financially, they've got new jobs... And she's not sure if she wants him anymore.

There is a close-up of PAUL. His mouth is open and he is staring at the CABLE GUY in disbelief. For the first time, PAUL is not looking at the CABLE GUY with disgust or with his eyes rolling.

PAUL
(in shock)
How...How did you possibly know all that?

CABLE GUY
Exactly! But only at that moment will she have to make a decision... Until then, she's got all the time in the world...Didn't you see how upset she got when she saw you with Daphne?

Again, PAUL just sits there dumbfounded. He cannot believe how much the CABLE GUY seems to know about his relationship. He mulls over the CABLE GUY'S last words to him.

PAUL
(with difficulty)
...Well, I didn't want to do it, but I think you may be right... Maybe I will have to swing a little to make her come around.

CABLE GUY
(boisterously)
Now you're talking!
(quietly)
...Just don't let anyone hear you say "swing."

The girls return and are standing in front of the table.

GINGER
Can we come back now?

CABLE GUY
Yeah...Actually, we're just leaving.

The CABLE GUY gets up from the table and PAUL follows.

GINGER
Where are we going?

CABLE GUY
Back to my place for a nightcap. I'm in the mood for a Frangelico and Milk.

DAPHNE
Can't you get that here?

CABLE GUY
Yeah...But here they don't have those little Cheddar Cheese Goldfish crackers.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY OF CABLE GUY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - EVENING

The CABLE GUY is sticking his key in the door and PAUL is standing behind him. The CABLE GUY suddenly stops sticking his key in the door and looks at the doorbell.

CABLE GUY
Try it.

PAUL
What?

CABLE GUY
The doorbell...Push it.

PAUL pushes the doorbell. The sound from the doorbell is the first few bars to The Love Boat Theme from the old television show.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
As soon as a fox hears that, she's thinking: Amore.

The voices of two women talking are heard down the hall. GINGER and DAPHNE are walking towards the CABLE GUY'S apartment. The CABLE GUY holds the door open for them. As the women walk inside, the CABLE GUY'S eyes meet PAUL'S eyes, and the CABLE GUY raises his eyebrows twice quickly, ala Groucho Marx.

CUT TO:

INT. CABLE GUY'S APARTMENT - LATE EVENING

PAUL and the CABLE GUY have just entered the apartment, and the CABLE GUY has closed the front door. PAUL is stopped just inside the front door, staring at a large framed picture on the wall. There is a CLOSE-UP of the picture. It is a large movie poster of the film, An American Gigolo, displaying Richard Gere. The CABLE GUY stops and looks at the poster with PAUL.

CABLE GUY
...The most important film for men in the last 50 years. An American Gigolo allowed a man to care about the way he looks and not have people call him a "fruitcake." It also made it okay for a woman to screw a guy <u>just</u> for the sport of it...Thank God for that movie.

The CABLE GUY walks away from the picture and goes into the living room. PAUL follows him. GINGER and DAPHNE are already sitting on the couch. On the coffee table, there are three large stacks of old PLAYBOY magazines. On top of the middle stack is an eight-by-ten framed picture of Hugh Hefner, smiling and smoking his trademark pipe. PAUL picks up the picture and looks at it. There is a CLOSE-UP of the picture. The picture is autographed and there is a signed caption above the signature. The caption reads:

"Craig -
Nice meeting you...But next time,
don't use all my chocolate sauce.
Hugh Hefner."

PAUL puts the picture back where he found it and sees that the CABLE GUY is now sitting between the two women on the couch. PAUL is now the only one still standing, so he sits in between the CABLE GUY and DAPHNE. The CABLE GUY suddenly looks at his watch.

CABLE GUY
(excitedly)
Jesus Christ! I didn't realize what time it is!

GINGER
Should we go?

CABLE GUY
Are you crazy?

The CABLE GUY stands up and picks up an empty glass and a pen from the coffee table. While he is holding the pen in one hand and the glass in the other, he taps the pen against the glass, so that it appears and sounds like he's ringing a bell.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
Hear ye...Hear ye...
(looks at his watch again)
It is now 1:07 a.m....
(pause)
I now pronounce: "Let The Fondling Begin!"

The CABLE GUY immediately throws his arms around GINGER and they start passionately making out. They are french-kissing and dry-humping like crazy, while PAUL is sitting less than one foot away from them on the same couch. PAUL clearly looks uncomfortable. DAPHNE gets up from the couch and stands in front of PAUL.

DAPHNE
Shall we leave them alone?

PAUL looks relieved and gladly gets up from where he is sitting. The CABLE GUY and GINGER don't notice.

CUT TO:

INT. SHORT HALLWAY IN CABLE GUY'S APARTMENT - LATE EVENING

DAPHNE is leading PAUL down the short, dark hallway, and he is following her. She stops at a room, opens the door, and turns on the lights. The light switch is one of those dimmers, and the room is barely lit. DAPHNE enters the room and PAUL follows her.

CUT TO:

INT. SMALL BEDROOM IN CABLE GUY'S APARTMENT - LATE EVENING

The bedroom DAPHNE and PAUL have just entered is not only barely lit, it is also very small. The bed, however, is big and takes up most of the room. PAUL and DAPHNE are standing there for an awkward moment.

DAPHNE
Sit down.

PAUL uncomfortably sits on the edge of the bed. She pushes him back so that he falls backward and is lying on his back on the bed. She closes the bedroom door.

DAPHNE
(continuing, in an alluring voice)
I think you're very sexy.

She pulls her sweater off over her head. She is still wearing a bra and looks incredible. PAUL is frozen. She quickly lies down on the bed and puts her arms around him. This was clearly her idea, and she is the aggressor. However, he does not allow his conscience to fight her. In a moment, we see that he has submitted to her passion.

CUT TO:

INT. SMALL BEDROOM INSIDE CABLE GUY'S APARTMENT - MORNING

The sunlight is peeking through the blinds. PAUL is under the bedsheets sleeping alone. The sunlight is shining right in his eyes, and he slowly opens his eyelids. It only takes a brief moment before he realizes where he is. He slowly sits up and looks at his clothes on the floor.

CUT TO:

INT. SHORT HALLWAY INSIDE CABLE GUY'S APARTMENT - MORNING

The door opens to the bedroom that PAUL and DAPHNE entered the night before. PAUL steps out of the bedroom and is now dressed. He is wearing the same clothes from last night, and he now looks quite disheveled. His hair is standing up in a way that looks truly ridiculous. We immediately hear a man's voice singing, which is coming from down the hall. In a moment, we can hear that it is the CABLE GUY'S voice, and he is singing his own version of the old Sheena Easton song, "Just Call Me Angel In The Morning." However, his version of the song is to replace the word "Angel" with the name "Angelo." Thus, we hear him singing:

CABLE GUY (O.S.)
(singing)
Just call me Angelo in the morning...

PAUL begins walking towards where the CABLE GUY'S voice is coming from.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN INSIDE CABLE GUY'S APARTMENT - MORNING

The CABLE GUY is in the kitchen standing at the stove. He is wearing an absolutely ridiculous-looking women's bathrobe. On the stove, four frying pans are cooking at once: Hash Brown Potatoes are in one pan; Bacon is cooking in another pan; Mushrooms, onions, bell peppers, and other vegetables are in a third pan; And in the fourth pan, the CABLE GUY is quickly stirring scrambled eggs with the skill of a Chef from Benihana Of Tokyo. PAUL walks in. The CABLE GUY sees him and looks happy.

CABLE GUY
Well! Good morning, you little rascule!

The CABLE GUY has pronounced the word "rascal" as "rascule."

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
How 'bout a little breakfast?

The CABLE GUY flips the bacon and some of the grease splatters on his bathrobe. The CABLE GUY jumps and quickly looks at the sleeve of his bathrobe with concern.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
Shit! I think bacon grease stains!

The CABLE GUY quickly sticks the sleeve under the kitchen faucet's running water for a few seconds. He then looks at the stain again and still seems concerned.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
...This is my mother's old robe. She used to cook in it when I was a kid...Always reminds me of her when I wear it.

PAUL
Where is she now?

CABLE GUY
Jail. Doing 5 years. She should be out next Christmas.

PAUL
(surprised)
What did she do?

CABLE GUY
Cockfighting. They said she was a big promoter...She was like the Don King of cockfighting...Sold a lot of t-shirts...

The CABLE GUY grabs two plates from the cupboard.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
...But she could never make a pay-per-view deal.

The CABLE GUY fills the two plates with food from the frying pans. There is a moment of silence. PAUL looks at all of it.

PAUL
(friendly)
...Hey...Thanks for making all of this.

CABLE GUY
...Like I told you: I take care of my friends.

They begin eating the food.

PAUL
...And thanks for everything last night, too...I have to admit I misjudged you at first...You really straightened me out about a lot of things...

PAUL takes another bite of food.

PAUL
(continuing)
And as for DAPHNE, that was incredible...It was just what I needed. Do you know that before last night, I'd been with only one woman in my life? And I haven't been with her in almost four months...So thanks, thanks again.

The CABLE GUY is busy eating his food, while listening to PAUL.

CABLE GUY
Hey, no problem. I could see how badly you needed it...It was my treat.

PAUL begins eating his food again, but the CABLE GUY'S last words did not sink in properly. PAUL stops eating and then looks up at the CABLE GUY.

PAUL
(still warmly)
What did you mean by that? ...That it was "your treat?"

The CABLE GUY is still eating and his face is buried in his plate. He does not even look up when he answers PAUL.

CABLE GUY
(from his plate and with his mouth full)
You know: I buy once, then you buy the next time.

PAUL did not understand this because the CABLE GUY'S mouth was full. PAUL still looks very confused.

PAUL
Could you repeat that again?

The CABLE GUY slowly swallows and his mouth is now clear.

CABLE GUY
(casually)
I said: I buy once, then you buy the next time...It's no big deal.

PAUL now looks concerned.

PAUL
Buy what?

CABLE GUY
You know, the women: Ginger and Daphne.

PAUL is now very concerned.

PAUL
You mean those two women last night...Ginger and Daphne... were hookers???

CABLE GUY
You're goddamn right they were. Who's got the time to wine and dine women who look like that?

PAUL now looks extremely upset.

PAUL
Oh, my God! Why didn't you tell me? I never would have done it!

CABLE GUY
What difference does it make? You used protection, right?

PAUL
Yeah...

CABLE GUY
I knew you would. Daphne always insists on protection. She keeps them in her stocking.

As disturbed as PAUL previously looked, he's starting to look worse.

PAUL
(angrily)
How did you know where she keeps her condoms?

CABLE GUY
How do you think, pal? I wouldn't lay someone on a good friend without first sampling the merchandise myself.

PAUL
(more upset)
You mean you...You did it with her, too?

CABLE GUY
Well sure...But that was a long time ago...

The CABLE GUY laughs to himself, appearing to remember something from the past.

CABLE GUY
...She was so pissed at me, too... I gave her crabs.

This is too much for PAUL. He throws his hands up to his face.

PAUL
(in a shriek)
Oh my God!

CABLE GUY
Relax...That was years ago...She already took care of it...Used that special ammonia shampoo... Anyway, she's been with tons of my friends since then, and no one's ever gotten anything...So you have nothing to worry about.

PAUL now puts his head in his hands and is too shaken up to speak. The CABLE GUY warmly puts his hand on PAUL'S shoulder.

CABLE GUY
(continuing, now in a soft voice)
...Listen, I told you that thing about the crabs in confidence... I'd appreciate it if you kept it just between us...You know, good friends...Because I don't want to scare any chicks off...

PAUL slowly lifts his head from his hands and looks up at the CABLE GUY. PAUL no longer looks weak. He looks as though he's staring at a man who he's been waiting his whole life to tell off.

PAUL
(slowly and deliberately)
Now I want you to listen to me: We're not <u>good</u> friends. We're not even <u>so-so</u> friends. We are <u>not friends period</u>! I never want to see or speak to you again... And I don't care if you come over to my place and take away my HBO and Showtime...I don't care if you break my tv...I will never have anything to do with you again.

The CABLE GUY is a bit taken aback by PAUL's words, but he remains calm.

CABLE GUY
Uh, Paul...It's not that simple...

PAUL
(still very angry)
What's not simple about it?

CABLE GUY
You've committed a felony, Paul... And if we're not friends, I can't just let it go.

PAUL
What are you talking about?

The CABLE GUY walks out of the kitchen for a brief moment and returns carrying a thick, hard covered law book. He opens the book and turns the pages until he finds what he's looking for.

CABLE GUY
(looking down at the book)
You see, right here: Volume 17 of the United States Copyright Act states that "it is illegal to receive any unpaid-for or bootlegged broadcasts for any period of time whatsoever..."

The CABLE GUY points with his finger to a specific passage on the page and puts the book in front of PAUL'S face.

CABLE GUY
(continuing, reading)
"...Anyone guilty of this offense can be sentenced up to ten years in federal prison, with a fine of not more than $500,000."

The CABLE GUY hands the open book to PAUL. PAUL takes it and begins reading the open page to himself. While PAUL is still reading, the CABLE GUY begins to speak again.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
I don't think you'd do well in prison, Paul...You look too much like Tom Cruise...And besides, they've got a bill in the legislature right now to ban all weight rooms from prisons...So when you get out in ten years, you're soft and flabby.

PAUL looks up from the book and doesn't appear afraid of these threats.

PAUL
Well if I get ten years, how much time are you going to get, a hundred?

CABLE GUY
Me? None.

PAUL
Yeah, right...And why will I get ten years while you get none?

CABLE GUY
Because they'll grant me immunity: Immunity for testifying against you.

PAUL
Well, what if I testify against you?

CABLE GUY
They don't want me...They want you.

PAUL
How do you figure?

CABLE GUY
Me...I'm just a cable guy. How many of us are there in the entire country? Five thousand? Ten Thousand? I'm one bad apple in a small group. By prosecuting me, they're only sending a message to five or ten thousand people not to do this kind of thing...

The CABLE GUY takes a sip of his drink.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
But you...You're Joe Citizen. You're one of five hundred million people who'd love to be getting cable for free...This is a multi-billion dollar industry and still growing. They've got to make an example of someone, before it's too late.

PAUL
(still dubious)
And I'm going to be the example?

CABLE GUY
Sure. Why not you? Do you have any idea how closely wrapped up the movie business and the Federal Government are? Two words for you: Ronald Reagan
(dramatic pause)
...And look who Clinton is always having at the White House: Barbra Streisand...Ted Danson...The kid who plays "Urkel"...

PAUL is taking all of this in and is starting to look uneasy.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
Yep...If I turn you in, they'll probably pin the medal of Freedom on me...Give me free passes to the Academy Awards every year and seat me at Pacino's table.

The CABLE GUY takes another sip of his drink.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
But if you don't believe me...If you want to chance it...Go ahead. If you think I'm bluffing, roll the dice...But you sure have a lot to lose...I doubt your girlfriend is gonna want you anymore if she can't see you for ten years. Her biological clock is ticking.

PAUL throws his head back in frustration and looks up to the heavens. In a few moments, he looks at the CABLE GUY again.

PAUL
Can I just ask you one question? Why me? What is it about me that makes you want me in your life so badly?

The CABLE GUY thinks about this for a moment.

CABLE GUY
...Why you? Because I like you. You're a good kid...You're like the little brother I never had... I don't have any family out here, and sometimes I get a little lonesome.
(thinks a bit more)
...And God forbid I come down with a case of appendicitis, who's going to take me to the hospital?

PAUL
(sarcastically)
Have you ever heard of an ambulance?

CABLE GUY
Yeah, right...You ever been in an ambulance alone? Those paramedics barely talk to you...They're always listening to the radio...Besides, it's not the same as riding with a little brother next to you.

PAUL
(extremely frustrated)
And this is how you treat a little brother? By blackmailing him?

CABLE GUY
(unashamed)
Hey, sometimes you've got to keep a kid in line...

PAUL looks incredibly frustrated and places his head in his hands.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:
INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - EVENING

PAUL is reading a book on the couch. His telephone rings once but he doesn't answer. His answering machine picks up the phone. The volume is turned up on the answering machine, so we can hear everything. PAUL stops reading his book and listens. We first hear a recording of PAUL'S outgoing message on the answering machine.

PAUL (O.S.)
Hi, this is Paul. Sorry I can't get to the phone right now. Please leave me a message when you hear the beep. Thanks.

There is a loud beep. We then hear the caller's voice.

CABLE GUY (O.S.)
Hey Paul, it's me. Pick up the phone...
(pause)
Come on, pick up.

PAUL is still sitting on the couch. It's clear that he's not going to pick up the phone.

CABLE GUY (O.S.)
(continuing)
Okay, fine...Be a baby...I know you're home...Listen, I know you're mad, but you'll forget it soon. Tomorrow, I'll show you what a good friend I really am.

PAUL gets a nervous expression on his face.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRIENDLY CABLE ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING - MORNING

The Friendly Cable building is exactly what you would expect it to be. The office building was probably built in the "cable rush" of the early eighties. It looks like one of those new three-story buildings that was built cheaply. There is a CLOSE-UP of the company logo on the door. The logo is a big television set whose picture tube has eyes, a nose, and an open mouth showing white teeth. The tv set appears to have an ear-to-ear grin, and the "Friendly Cable" caption is above it.

CUT TO:

INT. FRIENDLY CABLE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE - MORNING

The CABLE GUY is sitting at a desk and is on the telephone in the secretarial pool area. The secretarial pool is an open area that's not too large. There are 8-10 desks with computers and telephones on each. The company logo, as seen on the front door, is abundantly present.

CABLE GUY
(into phone)
...Yes, hi...Is this Springhouse Publishing? I'm with 60 Minutes... Mike Wallace's personal assistant. We're doing a story on the hierarchy of the publishing business, with a special segment on brown-nosing...
(he listens for a moment)
No...Don't worry...It'll be a flattering piece...
(MORE)

CABLE GUY
(continuing, into phone)
...Anyway, let's say I was in the mailroom and I wanted to get promoted to the next level...What level would that be?

The CABLE GUY makes a few notes on a piece of paper in front of him.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
...Okay...And who would make that decision?

The CABLE GUY jots down a few more notes.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
Okay...And who is the Publisher at your company who makes that decision?
(he listens for another moment)
...Ashley Kent...Would you happen to have a middle initial?
(pause)
"M"...Great.

He jots down a few more notes.

CABLE GUY
(continuing, into phone)
And what was your name...In case we decide to use you on the show?
(pause)
...No, ma'am...You don't have to give us your name. I understand.

The CABLE GUY hangs up the phone and then turns to look at the computer on his desk. He presses a few buttons on the computer and then looks down at the same piece of paper that he had been jotting the notes on.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
Let's see: Ashley M. Kent

The CABLE GUY types the name "Ashley M. Kent" into the computer. There is a CLOSE-UP of the computer screen. After a moment, it lists the following information:

"Ashley M. Kent
640 Greenacre Dr.
Pacific Palisades, CA 90758"

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
Ooooh...Fairly high rent district.
...Let's see how entertaining Mr.
Ashley M. Kent is.

The CABLE GUY presses another button on the computer. After a moment, there is another CLOSE-UP of the computer screen. New information now appears under Mr. Kent's name and address. The information lists the following:

"Number of Cable Outlets: 6
Movie Stations: HBO - 1 outlet."

The CABLE GUY can't believe what he sees.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
He lives on Greenacre...but he
only has one movie station! And
he only has it on one tv! This
guy is a classic tightwad.

The CABLE GUY presses a button on the computer, and a nearby printer begins printing a page.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
This should be a piece of cake.

CUT TO:

EXT. QUIET RESIDENTIAL STREET - AFTERNOON

The Friendly Cable truck is parked in front of a nice house in a residential neighborhood. A few feet away from the truck, the CABLE GUY is on his hands and knees on the sidewalk. He is reaching down into an opening in the ground which is right next to the sidewalk. There is a cement block, similar to a manhole cover, lying on top of the sidewalk a few feet away from him. It is clear that this manhole type cover has been removed to uncover the opening he's reaching into.

CUT TO:

INT. FRIENDLY CABLE TRUCK - AFTERNOON

The CABLE GUY is driving the truck down the residential street. He picks up the hand-held radio which calls into headquarters.

CABLE GUY
(into microphone-like radio)
Gorgeous One, do you read me?
This is Gorgeous Two...Over...

There is some static, then a woman's voice responds.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
What is it, Craig?

CABLE GUY
I'm on-call tonight for all outages, right?

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
I've got you down from 6:00 till 10:00.

CABLE GUY
Thanks.
(pause)
...God I love the way you smell.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOORWAY OF NICE HOUSE - EARLY EVENING

The CABLE GUY is standing in the doorway of a nice house. This is the same house that his truck was parked in front of, when he was reaching into the opening in the ground. He rings the doorbell. In a few moments, the door is opened by ASHLEY KENT. He is the same man who asked PAUL to help him put together a manuscript in an earlier scene. ASHLEY is nicely dressed and in his late-forties. He has that ivy-league educated, waspy, stuffed shirt personality. The CABLE GUY rushes inside past ASHLEY, as if there is some kind of emergency.

CABLE GUY
I got here as soon as I heard.

ASHLEY looks a bit surprised.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
You weren't supposed to tape anything tonight, were you?

ASHLEY
No, I...

CABLE GUY
(interrupting)
Weren't having company over to watch anything?

ASHLEY
No...

The CABLE GUY pretends to look relieved.

CABLE GUY
Good...That was close.

The CABLE GUY takes the tool bag he is carrying off his shoulder and puts it down.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
I guess we can relax a little.
(pause)
How long has it been out?

ASHLEY
I don't know. It was fine last night, but when I got home today...

CABLE GUY
(interrupting)
You got kids?

ASHLEY
(taken aback)
What?

CABLE GUY
You got kids? I was asking because Mary Poppins is on the Disney Channel tonight, so I thought if I got this thing fixed in time, they'd be able to see it.

ASHLEY
No...Thank you anyway...But we don't have Disney. Those stations are a little pricey.

CABLE GUY
(sympathetically)
I know what you mean.

The CABLE GUY looks around the room for a moment.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
You sure got a nice place, though...But what, with house payments, car payments, insurance, kids...How old are your kids, anyway?

ASHLEY
Twelve and nine.

CABLE GUY
Yeah...twelve and nine is rough... They're expensive at that age... Probably want everything they see on tv: Ninja Turtle Lunchboxes... Flintstones pajamas...Jurassic Park nightlights...It all adds up.
(pause)
But I'll tell you a little secret: Those movie stations like Disney, Cinemax, and Showtime...They don't have any commercials. So what your kids don't see on tv, they won't ask you to buy for them.

ASHLEY ponders this for a moment.

ASHLEY
You know, I hadn't thought of it that way...Maybe it would save me a few dollars...
(concerned)
But how much would it cost me to get?

CABLE GUY
...Let's not talk price just yet... What business are you in, anyway?

ASHLEY
Publishing.

CABLE GUY
No kidding. Where?

ASHLEY
At Springhouse...I'm one of the publishers.

CABLE GUY
Wow, what a small world! I've got only one friend in the publishing business, and he works at Springhouse, too...He's in the mailroom...Waiting for his big break.

ASHLEY
The mailroom's a good place to start. I started there.

CABLE GUY
You know, I just had a great idea. You seem like such a nice guy, family man, and all that...What if I were to give you all of the movie stations for nothing?

ASHLEY
(very happily surprised)
Can you do that?

CABLE GUY
Sure...I'd just like you to do one little thing for me...

By the expression on ASHLEY'S face, he looks eager to please.

CUT TO:

INT. SPRINGHOUSE PUBLISHING MAILROOM - MORNING

PAUL, MARK, and two other young mailroom employees are sorting through some papers. ASHLEY KENT enters the mailroom and has a formal air about him.

ASHLEY
Mr. Richards...Could I see you in my office please?

ASHLEY immediately exits from the mailroom. There is absolute silence. By ASHLEY'S tone, nobody can tell if his request should be received as good or bad. PAUL immediately puts down what he's doing. He and MARK look at each other, then PAUL exits the mailroom.

CUT TO:

INT. ASHLEY KENT'S OFFICE - MORNING

The office is very nicely decorated with wood and brown colors. It has an "old-money" look to it. ASHLEY is seated behind the desk in an oversized, very comfortable brown leather chair. PAUL is seated in one of the two chairs facing ASHLEY'S desk. PAUL looks a bit awkward.

ASHLEY
I've been watching you, Richards... You do good work...You may not know this, but an assistant editor's position is open...And I thought you'd be a good candidate for the job.

PAUL looks very pleasantly surprised.

ASHLEY
(continuing)
Well...Do you want it?

PAUL
(excitedly)
Yes, sir! Thank you, sir...I won't let you down.

PAUL takes a deep breath.

PAUL
(continuing)
Wow...I never even thought you knew who I was.

ASHLEY
(very matter-of-factly)
Nonsense. I know who all of our workers are, especially the good ones.

PAUL gets out of his chair, stands up, and extends his hand to ASHLEY. ASHLEY shakes PAUL'S hand warmly.

ASHLEY
(continuing)
I'll be candid with you, Richards. I do think you do a good job... But I think all of you mailroom people are doing a good job. That's why it's so hard to make these kinds of decisions...But in your case, it was a recommendation from someone outside the company.

PAUL suddenly looks confused. ASHLEY warmly puts his arm around PAUL and now speaks quietly to him.

ASHLEY
(continuing, now smiling)
We've got a mutual friend, my boy...Good man...Craig Swank... The Cable Guy. He's responsible for this...

PAUL forces a smile. ASHLEY pats PAUL on the back, as PAUL starts to exit his office.

ASHLEY
(continuing)
You can start in your new position tomorrow...As a matter of fact, why don't you come by the house, tomorrow night? I'm having some people over.
(grinning)
Craig got me the big heavyweight fight. It starts at 7:30. He'll be there.

PAUL somehow manages to keep the smile on his face, but we can see that he's burning on the inside.

CUT TO:

INT. PAUL'S NEW OFFICE AT SPRINGHOUSE PUBLISHING - MORNING

PAUL is sitting at the desk in his new office. He is reading a manuscript of some kind. The office is small, has a window, and is decorated modestly but stylishly. It is furnished with a desk, a telephone, two chairs facing the desk, and the chair that PAUL is sitting in. In a moment, an average-looking, thirty-year-old secretary enters his office. Her name is JOYCE. She is carrying a few sheets of paper.

JOYCE
So...how's the first day going?

PAUL looks up at her.

PAUL
Fine...Fine, thanks.

JOYCE hands PAUL the papers she is carrying.

JOYCE
Here...This Fax came for you a minute ago.

PAUL takes the papers from her. He appears a bit surprised.

PAUL
Thanks.

JOYCE exits from his office. PAUL now takes a close look at the papers. There is a CLOSE-UP of the top page. It is a Fax cover page. It reads as follows:

"To: Paul Richards
From: Craig Swank
Re: You owe me, big-time!"

PAUL turns to the next page. There is a CLOSE-UP of this page, too. It reads as follows:

"I just sent a dozen roses and a copy of the following letter to Robin Fields at Colossal Entertainment. She should be calling you in about a minute."

PAUL quickly and nervously turns to the last page. PAUL reads this page aloud.

PAUL
(reading aloud and nervously)
"Dear Robin,
I just got promoted to assistant editor. Strangely enough, it means nothing without you in my life. Like Ronald Coleman said in the movie, If I Were King, everything I have of any value I would gladly give away if it meant that we could be together.
All of my heart, Paul

P.S. Come with me to my boss' house tonight for the big fight.

After finishing the letter, PAUL freezes. He doesn't know how to react, because as much as he can't stand the CABLE GUY, he knows it was a great letter. After a moment, JOYCE enters the office again.

JOYCE
There's a phone call for you... Robin Fields.

PAUL looks a bit startled. He doesn't quite look ready to talk to her yet.

PAUL
Uh...Okay...Put it through.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOORWAY OF ASHLEY KENT'S HOUSE - EVENING

PAUL and ROBIN have just arrived at the door. PAUL presses the doorbell. ROBIN is looking at PAUL in a very loving way.

ROBIN
(very warmly)
...I still can't get over that letter you sent me...it was the sweetest, most romantic letter I've ever got...

ROBIN is interrupted by the front door opening. Standing there with a big grin on his face is the CABLE GUY.

CABLE GUY
You came!

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM OF ASHLEY KENT'S HOUSE - EVENING

There are about twenty people sitting in the nicely decorated room. The large television is on, however, the fight hasn't started yet. The tv screen is displaying pre-fight commentary, which most guests aren't paying attention to. Instead, they are engaged in their own conversations. The clearly upscale crowd is scattered throughout the room: They are sitting on the couch, living room chairs, dining room chairs, and even the floor. The crowd looks to be in their late-thirties to mid-fifties. PAUL and ROBIN are sitting next to each other and are among those sprawled out on the floor. The CABLE GUY is behind the bar making a drink and looks very at home. He looks across the room to ASHLEY who is sitting on the couch.

CABLE GUY
(calling across the room)
Hey Ash...How's the drink? A touch more lemon? Another onion? What's your pleasure?

ASHLEY has just taken another sip of the drink in his hand.

ASHLEY
No...No...It's perfect, Craig... Perfect...Who taught you how to make a drink like this?

The rapport between ASHLEY and the CABLE GUY is true chemistry.

CABLE GUY
(warmly)
Well, I never told you Ash, but my grandaddy on my mother's side used to run liquor for Al Capone in the twenties.

ASHLEY
Is that so?

CABLE GUY
Yep...Knew how to make every drink ever invented...Was a big drinker himself, too...Six months after he died, his liver won a Charleston contest.

ASHLEY bursts into a wonderful laugh, as do most of the others listening. PAUL is silent. There is a brief CLOSE-UP of the television. The picture is of a boxing ring with two heavyweight fighters standing in the middle of the ring, while being instructed by the referee. It appears that the fight is going to start in a few moments.

ASHLEY
Who do you like, Craig?

CABLE GUY
(very sure)
Oh, Armstrong cannot beat Peters. It's historically impossible, like PAUL was telling me earlier...

There is a quick shot of PAUL. He suddenly looks nervous, and it's clear he has no idea what the CABLE GUY is about to say.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
You see, Armstrong is a puncher, Peters is a boxer. Historically, the boxer has always beaten the puncher:
(pause)
...What were those fights again that you mentioned, Paul? ...Oh that's right: Ali beat Liston; Sugar Ray beat Hagler; Corbett beat John L. Sullivan...All boxers who beat punchers.

ASHLEY is beaming and looks over at PAUL.

ASHLEY
(to PAUL)
I didn't know you were a boxing historian, Richards...very impressive.

PAUL looks sheepishly at ASHLEY and smiles. The CABLE GUY then exchanges glances with PAUL, and the CABLE GUY winks at him.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM OF ASHLEY KENT'S HOUSE - EVENING

The scene is the same. Everyone is still seated in the same spot they were in when the fight started. However, the television now displays one boxer flat on his back and looking unconscious, while the referee is counting to ten.

CABLE GUY
(turning to everyone)
...You see, Paul was right...A puncher can never beat a boxer.

PAUL smiles sheepishly. The CABLE GUY, on the other hand, has a frustrated look on his face.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
...I only wish I bet the fight... But my bookie was at the hockey game.

Everyone starts to get up and stretch. There is a lot of ad-lib conversations going on. The CABLE GUY turns to PAUL.

CABLE GUY
(continuing, to PAUL)
Hey...we need to talk.

The CABLE GUY starts to walk into another room and motions with his head for PAUL to follow him. PAUL whispers something to ROBIN, she nods, then PAUL walks towards the room that the CABLE GUY has entered.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM AT ASHLEY KENT'S HOUSE - EVENING

The CABLE GUY is already standing in the bathroom by the sink when PAUL walks in. As soon as PAUL is inside, the CABLE GUY closes the door. PAUL looks around the room, clearly uncomfortable.

PAUL
You had to choose a bathroom for us to talk in? What are people going to think? I mean, when was the last time you saw two men walk into a bathroom together and then close the door behind them?

CABLE GUY
(thinks about this for a moment)
...I think it was at a Bette Midler concert...But relax: We're not gonna be in here long. I just wanted to give you the chance to apologize to me in private.

PAUL
Me? Apologize to you? For what?

CABLE GUY
For overreacting the other day.

PAUL
You tricked me into having sex with a prostitute...I don't consider that overreacting.

CABLE GUY
I didn't trick you...You just never asked...But that's besides the point...Right now, you've got the job you want; you've got the girl you want; You're over at your boss' house for a social function. ...And none of that would have happened if you hadn't met me.

PAUL listens to all of this. While he clearly looks frustrated and doesn't like what he's hearing, he knows the CABLE GUY is right.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
If there's something I said that you disagree with, speak up any time...

PAUL just stares at him. He can't disagree. In a moment, PAUL'S expression indicates that he's lightening up a bit. The CABLE GUY sees this, smiles, and then extends his hand for a handshake. It appears that PAUL is about to shake his hand.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
...Okay, then: Best friends again?

PAUL hears this and suddenly freezes. He does not stick out his hand. The CABLE GUY sees this but continues to leave his hand extended.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
Hey, come on...Don't forget how good I was making you look out there a few minutes ago...

PAUL
...I just have one question for you: Why do we have to become "best friends?"...I mean, first, you just wanted to be friends... Then, it became really good friends...And now suddenly it's best friends?

The CABLE GUY listens to PAUL'S question carefully. The CABLE GUY shakes his head back and forth in amazement to indicate PAUL's naivete.

CABLE GUY
(thoughtfully)
Paulie...Paulie...Paulie...
(very lightly)
Haven't you ever heard that a relationship has to keep growing...or else it dies?

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM AT ASHLEY KENT'S HOUSE - EVENING

PAUL and the CABLE GUY have just re-entered from the bathroom, and it appears that the party is breaking up. PAUL approaches ROBIN, who is talking to ASHLEY. ASHLEY turns away from her and briefly talks to someone else. The CABLE GUY comes up to PAUL and ROBIN and sticks his head between them.

CABLE GUY
Come on...it's still early. We're getting coffee.

From the expression on their faces, it is clear that ROBIN reacts positively to this suggestion, while PAUL is not pleased.

CUT TO:

INT. COFFEE HOUSE - EVENING

The next eleven scenes, including this one, are part of a two to three minute MUSICAL INTERLUDE/MONTAGE. Each scene is only five to twenty seconds long. The music should be a song like Bette Midler's "Friends" or the Beatles "I Get By With A Little Help From My Friends." It doesn't have to be either of these songs, but it must be a very upbeat, pop-type song about friendship. During this scene and throughout the musical interlude, we cannot hear any words spoken. Instead, we can only hear the song playing. In each scene of the MUSICAL INTERLUDE, everyone is wearing different clothes than in the previous scene, indicating that the scene is occurring on a different day, unless otherwise noted. In the present scene at the coffee house, the CABLE GUY, PAUL, and ROBIN are all seated at a booth, with ROBIN in the middle. The CABLE GUY'S lips are moving, and it appears that he's telling a very funny story. ROBIN is laughing hysterically and is completely engaged in it. PAUL is looking at the CABLE GUY and listening to him, but PAUL has a deadpan serious expression and looks bored.

CUT TO:

INT. SPRINGHOUSE PUBLISHING LOBBY - AFTERNOON

The MUSICAL INTERLUDE continues. ASHLEY and the CABLE GUY are walking towards the front door laughing, and have their arms around each other in a friendly way. They turn back around, and we see PAUL walking behind them. PAUL forces a smile.

CUT TO:

EXT. HORSE RACING TRACK/PADDOCK AREA - AFTERNOON

The MUSICAL INTERLUDE continues. The horses with their jockeys mounted are walking around a circular ring slowly. It appears that these are the horses running in the next race. PAUL and the CABLE GUY are looking at each horse as it goes by. There is a CLOSE-UP of PAUL watching one horse in particular. He suddenly looks and sees that the CABLE GUY is no longer standing next to him. After a moment, PAUL sees that the CABLE GUY is about twenty feet away and is whispering something into the ear of a jockey sitting on one of the horses. The jockey is leaning over to hear what the CABLE GUY is saying. The CABLE GUY then tries to inconspicuously stick some paper money into the jockey's hand. The jockey then gives the CABLE GUY a disgusted look and rides away from him, not taking the money. The CABLE GUY turns to PAUL, shrugs his shoulders, and gives PAUL a look like "the jockey was nuts." PAUL can only shake his head in disbelief.

CUT TO:

INT. SUPERMARKET - EVENING

The MUSICAL INTERLUDE continues. PAUL and the CABLE GUY are in the fruit and vegetable section. PAUL is pushing the cart. The CABLE GUY picks up an apple from the shelf and takes a bite of it. The CABLE GUY then hands the apple to PAUL and motions him to take a bite, as well. In a moment, the CABLE GUY'S face registers that he has a terrible taste in his mouth from the apple. The CABLE GUY then mouths something and strongly motions for PAUL to put the apple back. PAUL is a bit reluctant, so he lifts the apple near his face and looks at the missing bite. The CABLE GUY has now turned the corner onto the next aisle and is out of sight. There is a CLOSE-UP of PAUL hesitatingly placing the apple back where the CABLE GUY picked it up from. After placing it back, the CAMERA pulls back. PAUL suddenly feels another person's presence behind him, and he quickly turns around. Standing face to face with PAUL is a middle-aged man wearing a name tag that says "Manager." The manager is giving PAUL a look like, "I caught you red-handed." PAUL quickly looks to where the CABLE GUY had been standing, but PAUL is the only person on the aisle. He suddenly looks very nervous.

CUT TO:

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - AFTERNOON

The MUSICAL INTERLUDE continues. PAUL, ROBIN, and the CABLE GUY are lying out by a pool, which appears to be at an apartment building. They are all lying on their backs and looking up to the sun. ROBIN is reading a magazine. She is sitting between the two men. The CABLE GUY mouths something to ROBIN, and PAUL opens his eyes. ROBIN then gets out of her chair, and the CABLE GUY hands her a bottle of suntan lotion. The CABLE GUY then flips over on his stomach, exposing his back with some acne on it. ROBIN starts to rub the lotion into his back, and PAUL looks truly nauseous.

CUT TO:

EXT. CABLE GUY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MORNING

The MUSICAL INTERLUDE continues. The CABLE GUY is holding a water hose in his hand, and he's giving HEF a bath on the lawn in front of his building. HEF is currently covered with soap. The CABLE GUY is standing about five feet in front of HEF. PAUL, who is also present, is standing about five feet to the right of HEF. PAUL is wearing a nice pair of khaki slacks, topsider shoes, and a navy-blue polo shirt. He appears to have just stopped by on his way to another place. The CABLE GUY aims the hose at HEF and begins to rinse him off. Suddenly a new red convertible drives by and there is a gorgeous blonde behind the wheel. There is a CLOSE-UP of the CABLE GUY, who is momentarily mesmerized, and he turns to watch her as she drives by. Suddenly, something close to the CABLE GUY gets his attention back. While the CAMERA is still CLOSE-UP, the CABLE GUY'S facial expression suddenly changes to awkward. The CAMERA pulls back and we see that the CABLE GUY's hose is now aimed at PAUL, and he is now hosing PAUL. The CABLE GUY quickly stops, but it's too late. PAUL's clothes are soaking, and he doesn't look happy.

CUT TO:

EXT. GOLF COURSE - AFTERNOON

The MUSICAL INTERLUDE continues. There is a CLOSE-UP of PAUL on the putting green of a hole. He is about 8 feet away from the cup and appears to be concentrating intensely. This seems like a very important putt. He takes his putter back and, just as he's about to hit, he stops in the middle of his putting motion with an irritated expression on his face. His concentration has clearly been broken. As the CAMERA pulls back, PAUL looks to his left. Standing there is the CABLE GUY, with his hands interlocked and cracking his knuckles. The CABLE GUY then makes an unauthentic expression as if to apologize for his unintentional mishap. The CABLE GUY is wearing a truly obnoxious golf outfit, with pink knickers, a pink checkered shirt, and a small white french artist-type hat. ASHLEY is also present on the green.

CUT TO:

INT. CABLE GUY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

The MUSICAL INTERLUDE continues. The CABLE GUY is under the covers on his back and has a thermometer in his mouth. He looks miserable. He mouths some words, and then the CAMERA FOCUSES on where the CABLE GUY is looking. Standing there is PAUL, and he's got HEF on a leash. PAUL, with leash in hand, leaves the bedroom with HEF.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK - MORNING

The MUSICAL INTERLUDE continues. It's a beautiful day. PAUL is taking HEF for a walk and is wearing the same clothes as in the previous scene, indicating that it's the same day. HEF stops at a tree, sniffs, then hunches over in a way which looks like he's about to go to the bathroom (number two). PAUL looks away for a moment, then appears to hear something. He turns around. There is a policeman standing behind him, writing a ticket. PAUL looks to his left and now sees a posted sign. In big letters, the sign reads:

Pooper Scooper Law In Effect:
$200 fine.

PAUL looks up to the heavens with a "Why Me" expression on his face.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - AFTERNOON

The MUSICAL INTERLUDE continues. PAUL and ROBIN are lying on the beach next to each other. PAUL leans over to ROBIN'S towel, she looks at him, and he kisses her romantically. Suddenly, he appears distracted and looks up. The CAMERA FOCUSES on the CABLE GUY who is about thirty feet away and is stabbing one of those huge umbrellas into the sand. He is with GINGER. PAUL looks aggravated.

CUT TO:

EXT. BASEBALL STADIUM - EVENING

The MUSICAL INTERLUDE continues. It would be preferable if this were a Dodger or Angel game. However, it doesn't have to be, if convenience or other obstacles don't allow it to be. The scene can still work if it's a college game. The scene begins with a CLOSE-UP of a pitch caught by the catcher. The umpire motions that it's a ball. Suddenly, something seems to have caught the umpire's attention behind him. The umpire takes off his mask and so does the catcher. They turn and look to the first row in the stands. The CABLE GUY is standing up yelling and going crazy. (CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:
It appears that the CABLE GUY is mouthing "That was a Strike!" He is causing a huge spectacle and is carrying on so that the game can't continue. In a moment, all of the players on the field are also looking at the CABLE GUY, while PAUL is sitting next to him very embarrassed. The CABLE GUY is carrying on so strongly that three large male ushers suddenly appear. By force, they grab him from behind and drag him up the aisle. Consequently, the CABLE GUY is still facing the field as he's being dragged, and he's ranting and raving all the way up the aisle. Everyone in the stands is looking at him, as though he were a crazy man. It is at this moment that the MUSICAL INTERLUDE winds down, and we start to hear the CABLE GUY's voice. He is now looking towards where PAUL is sitting.

CABLE GUY
(yelling)
...Paul...You gotta bail me out...
...And you gotta drive the truck home!

This gets PAUL's attention. Though he doesn't want to, PAUL turns around and looks up the aisle at the CABLE GUY.

CABLE GUY
(yelling to PAUL)
...Here, take the keys!

PAUL sees the CABLE GUY reach into his pocket and pull out his keys. However, the ushers don't stop dragging him, so he tries to throw the keys to PAUL. Naturally, when he throws them, he hits an old man in the back of the head. PAUL looks mortified.

CUT TO:

EXT. BASEBALL STADIUM PARKING LOT - EVENING

PAUL uses the keys to unlock the driver's side door of the Friendly Cable Truck. He opens the door, gets in, and starts the motor. He looks very uncomfortable in the truck. As he drives away, we can see that he's not happy.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:
INT. PAUL'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

PAUL is sitting at his desk, which is covered with papers, and is on the telephone with ROBIN.

PAUL
(into phone)
Where were you at lunch today? I came by to meet you, but you'd already left.

CUT TO:

INT. COLOSSAL ENTERTAINMENT RECEPTION AREA - AFTERNOON

ROBIN is sitting at her reception desk. She is on the telephone with PAUL. The CAMERA should either cut back and forth between the two locations or use a split-screen.

ROBIN
(into phone)
...Oh, I'm sorry...Craig came by, and we grabbed salads.

PAUL looks like he is about to explode.

PAUL
(into phone, furious)
You had lunch with Craig? Alone?

ROBIN
Why not? You're with him all the time.

These words have truly stung PAUL.

ROBIN
(continuing)
Besides...it was completely innocent. He has some movie ideas that he wants to pitch to the producers here...And he wanted to run them by me first.

At this moment, JOYCE enters his office.

JOYCE
(quietly, so the person PAUL is talking to won't overhear)
Phone call for you...Craig Swank.

PAUL
(to JOYCE, anxiously)
Put it through!
(into phone again, sounding urgent)
I gotta call you back, sweetheart...

JOYCE exits, and PAUL hangs up the phone. In a moment, the phone rings. PAUL answers it before the first ring is complete.

CUT TO:

INT. FRIENDLY CABLE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE - AFTERNOON

The CABLE GUY is on the phone while sitting at a desk in the middle of the secretarial pool. His feet are up on the desk, and he looks very laid back. During this phone conversation, the CAMERA should cut back and forth between the two locations.

CABLE GUY
(into phone, relaxed)
...Hey, Paulie...What's doing?

PAUL
(into phone)
Who told you that you could have lunch with ROBIN today?

CABLE GUY
(still laid back)
Relax, I didn't make a move.

PAUL
That isn't the point! I don't want you having lunch with her behind my back...
(pause)
And another thing: Stop sending her those poems!

CABLE GUY
Why? I sign <u>your</u> name to them... She loves it.

PAUL
I don't care if she loves it. It's dishonest...And then when she calls to thank me, I've got to act like I sent them...So stop it.

CABLE GUY
Suit yourself...But don't be surprised if she starts putting out less...

There is a pause. PAUL is trying not to lose his temper.

PAUL
...Anything else?

CABLE GUY
...Nope...I'm kinda busy, myself... I've got an appointment to hook up Heather Locklear this afternoon... ...What do you think I should try to get?

PAUL still looks quite irritated. He has actually become distracted by his temper.

PAUL
...Look...I don't know...I'll talk to you later.

PAUL is about to hang up the phone.

CABLE GUY
Wait...What are you doing tonight?

PAUL
(impatiently)
I'm having dinner with ROBIN.

CABLE GUY
You just had dinner with her last night.

PAUL
(exploding)
No, I had dinner with <u>you</u> last night. I haven't seen her in two days.

CABLE GUY
Boy, are you pussy-whipped. I'll catch you later.

PAUL hangs up the phone. He is steaming. After a few moments, ASHLEY walks into PAUL'S office. PAUL tries to cool off so that ASHLEY won't notice his mood.

ASHLEY
How does the Halpern novel look?

PAUL
Uh...Fine, sir...

PAUL glances down at a large manuscript which is open and face-down on his desk.

PAUL
(continuing)
But it is nine hundred pages... I've still got a ways to go.

ASHLEY
(understanding)
That's alright, son...Do the best you can...But we do have a deadline.

CUT TO:

INT. PAUL'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING

The sunlight is coming through the window. It appears to be a weekend day, because PAUL is home, sprawled out on the couch, and wearing sweats. He is reading the large manuscript that was on his desk in the last scene. There is a knock on the front door. PAUL looks up.

PAUL
Who is it?

A voice comes from behind the front door.

CABLE GUY (O.S.)
It's your 24 hour source for movies, sports, and entertainment.

PAUL reacts in a way which indicates that he's getting really tired of this situation. He pulls himself off of the couch, walks to the front door, and opens it. Standing there is the CABLE GUY. He is barefoot, wearing a wetsuit, and has a diving mask on his forehead.

CABLE GUY
Surf's up!

PAUL takes one look at him, leaves the front door wide open, and walks back to where he was sitting on the couch. PAUL picks up his manuscript again and buries himself in it, ignoring the CABLE GUY.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
Hey, hey, hey...I just heard on the news: They've got six footers at Zuma and eight footers at Huntington.

PAUL looks up at the CABLE GUY, glares at him for a second, then goes back to the manuscript.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
What's the problem...You don't have a wetsuit? No big deal: I don't get real cold...You can wear this one...

The CABLE GUY starts taking off the wetsuit in the middle of the living room.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
Close your eyes...

PAUL cannot help but look up. The CABLE GUY has forced PAUL to pay attention to him.

PAUL
Okay, stop...

The CABLE GUY is now out of the top half of the wetsuit, exposing his bare chest and stomach. He continues to pull it down, and is about to expose his private parts.

PAUL
(continuing, practically screaming)
Stop!!!

The CABLE GUY stops and looks at PAUL. The CABLE GUY is clearly startled by PAUL'S outburst.

CABLE GUY
Jesus, Paulie...I never knew you could yell like that...God forbid if I'm ever getting raped, I hope you're around.

PAUL holds up the manuscript that he's been reading.

PAUL
(angry)
You see this? ...This is known as work. I have work to do. Ashley needs this finished by Wednesday.

CABLE GUY
So? It's only Saturday.

PAUL
It's nine hundred pages!

CABLE GUY
So what? Ashley doesn't care. What's he gonna do, fire you? In about a month, I'm getting him one of those black descrambler boxes to bootleg pay-per-view... In a year or two, I'm getting him that Virtual Reality stuff... You're set at Springhouse for life.

PAUL
(sarcastically)
So, in other words, why work at all...is that it? Why should I even bother going in, since my work isn't really being evaluated?

The CABLE GUY thinks about this for a moment.

CABLE GUY
Good point.

PAUL
Do you know what that feels like? ...To think I don't make any difference whatsoever?
(extremely frustrated)
...It's like it doesn't matter what I do or when I do it...As long as ASHLEY gets his movies...

CABLE GUY
(nodding in agreement)
Then why can't you go to the beach?

PAUL just drops his head down in frustration.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

PAUL and ROBIN are having a candlelit dinner in a small romantic Italian restaurant. ROBIN is looking at PAUL in a very loving way. PAUL is staring at the restaurant's front door. He doesn't look happy. ROBIN takes his hand.

ROBIN
What's wrong?

PAUL is still looking towards the restaurant's entrance, then looks back at her.

PAUL
...I'm sorry...I just can't get him off my mind...I keep waiting for him to walk through that front door...Probably carrying his own bottle of Chianti...

ROBIN
But you didn't tell him we were coming here...We didn't even decide to come here until five minutes ago...

PAUL
It doesn't matter...He always finds me...He'll lick his own lips and somehow figure out that I'm in the mood for Italian food... Then, he'll narrow it down to five or six places...And he'll be here in fifteen minutes.

There is a moment of silence. ROBIN just looks at PAUL. She can see that he is clearly not himself.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF PAUL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

PAUL pulls up to his building in his '89 Nissan 240 SX. He looks to his right and sees a large moving van parked in front. He casually glances at it, then pulls past the truck on his way into the parking lot. PAUL looks in his rear-view mirror and sees one of the movers from the truck carrying a large framed picture. There is a CLOSE-UP of the mover and the framed picture he is carrying: It is the American Gigolo poster seen previously at the CABLE GUY'S apartment. PAUL can't believe what he sees, and he immediately stops the car. He then puts the car in reverse and backs up until he reaches the mover. PAUL rolls his window down.

PAUL
(to mover)
Excuse me...

The mover looks over at PAUL, but keeps walking.

PAUL
(continuing)
That picture belongs to Craig Swank, doesn't it?

MOVER
Yep, he's moving in...Apartment 208...

This hits PAUL like a ton of bricks. He just freezes. He doesn't know what to say. The mover continues walking towards the building carrying the picture. PAUL just watches him for a moment, unsure what to do. In a few seconds, he makes a decision.

PAUL
(to MOVER)
Wait...Stop!

The mover stops and gives PAUL a look like "why are you bothering me?"

PAUL
(continuing, to Mover)
Craig Swank is <u>not</u> moving in here.

MOVER
(a bit dumbfounded)
Then why'd he hire us?

PAUL realizes that the mover doesn't understand the situation.

PAUL
Trust me...He's not moving in...
If you wouldn't mind waiting
here for a few minutes, he'll
come down and tell you himself.

The mover puts down the picture he's been carrying.

MOVER
...It's okay with me...but we're
still charging him $100 an hour.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY OF PAUL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

PAUL is standing in front of an apartment door marked #208. PAUL knocks on the door. From inside, we hear the CABLE GUY's voice.

CABLE GUY (O.S.)
(concerned)
I'm coming...I'm coming...Don't
try to open the door yourself if
you're carrying my American Gigolo
poster...

The front door is opened by the CABLE GUY. He looks very shocked to see PAUL.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
Paul, what are you doing here? You
spoiled my surprise.

PAUL quickly walks past him and into the apartment.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT #208 - DAY

PAUL has just entered, and the CABLE GUY closes the door behind him. The apartment is totally empty, outside of a few boxes.

CABLE GUY
You're not going to believe what happened to me yesterday...My landlord claimed he found HEF's fur in the pool drain...But HEF hasn't been in that pool in two months...I even showed him that while the fur was HEF'S, it couldn't have been recent fur... Because I keep HEF's fur shorter during the rainy season...

The CABLE GUY takes a breath.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
...But he didn't believe me..And he told me that either HEF had to go or I did...So we both left.
(pause)
I had to use all my strength to restrain HEF.

The CABLE GUY has finished and now looks at PAUL. PAUL has listened patiently to all of this, but he has not shown any compassion.

PAUL
But why are you here?

CABLE GUY
What are you talking about? I just told you.

PAUL
No, no, no...Why are you here? ...At this apartment building...

CABLE GUY
Why not here? You seem to like it. ...Plus, I introduced HEF to the manager, and they hit it off.

PAUL
Well, I don't want you here...This building is the last aspect of my life that you aren't a part of... You're always at my office; You're always with my boss; You visit my girlfriend at work and have plans with her...What do I have left that's just mine?

PAUL stops to catch his breath.

PAUL
(continuing)
...To have you living four doors down from me is just too much...
(pause)
As much as I like HEF, you're gonna have to find another place to live.

The CABLE GUY looks PAUL up and down for a moment. He has never seen PAUL so forceful, aggressive, and stubborn. The CABLE GUY clearly looks a bit stunned but manages to maintain his composure.

CABLE GUY
Come on...Don't be that way... We'll have fun together if I'm here...I'll make us coffee in the morning...We can go jogging after work...

These words have no effect on PAUL.

PAUL
I repeat: You are <u>not</u> moving in here...So you may as well tell your movers <u>now</u>: It's costing you $100 an hour while we talk.

The CABLE GUY cannot believe what he's hearing. He is now a bit angry.

CABLE GUY
...Maybe you've forgotten who you're talking to, buddy-boy...But I'm your meal ticket, your freedom from incarceration, and your piece of ass all rolled into one. I decide where I'm going to live, not you.

PAUL
What are you, threatening me? Do you think that scares me?

The CABLE GUY tries to stay in control, but he is clearly confused as to what's going on.

PAUL
(continuing)
I <u>already</u> told your movers to stop unloading your stuff when I was on my way up here. They're downstairs waiting for you to pay them so they can leave.

The CABLE GUY isn't quite sure what to make of this and can't tell if PAUL is bluffing. After a moment, the CABLE GUY walks to the front door and opens it. He steps out into the hallway in front of his front door and looks down the hall.

CABLE GUY
(calling down hallway and trying to remain calm)
...Oh, Pedro...Marty...

There is no answer, and the CABLE GUY looks concerned. He then turns and looks down the other side of the hallway.

CABLE GUY
(still calling, but slightly less calm)
Pedro...where are you guys?
(pause, then a bit desperate)
Hey! Where's my American Gigolo poster?

PAUL does not bat an eye.

PAUL
I told you: They're not coming.

There is a moment of silence, almost as if it's a chess game, and it's the CABLE GUY'S next move. The CABLE GUY starts to react.

CABLE GUY
You're crazy, you know that? You've lost your mind...You were sitting on easy street..and now you're gonna blow it. I'm still moving in here...You can't stop me...But now you're gonna get screwed.

PAUL
(calmly)
No, I'm not.

CABLE GUY
How do you figure?

PAUL
Because the only way someone can get screwed is if they've got something to lose...And I have <u>nothing</u> to lose anymore: I'm miserable at my job; I barely get to spend any time with Robin, thanks to you...

CABLE GUY
Oh, and I suppose you were better off before you met me? ...When you were in the mailroom and Robin would barely talk to you...

PAUL
(very sure)
Oh, absolutely! At least then, I had the chance to someday be happy...I had the chance to get promoted on my own...I had the chance to get Robin back myself... And not because of my cable stations, not because of my job, and not because of your letters...

The CABLE GUY looks like he's running out of ideas, until one last one sparks his face.

CABLE GUY
Well, even if you're not happy now, don't forget about jail...Ten years in a federal penitentiary is a lot worse than having me as your neighbor...

PAUL still does not blink an eye.

PAUL
(pretending concern)
Oh...Now you're gonna report me for having the cable? I'm so scared...
(seriously again)
You're not going to tell anyone anything, because if you do, you'll lose your own job...A job that I know you love, because it allows you to manipulate people...

CABLE GUY
(confused)
...So what is this? You're threatening me now?

PAUL
(matter-of-factly)
That's right. And if you don't walk out of here in five seconds and tell those movers to go home, I'm going to Friendly Cable this afternoon and I'm going to tell them the whole story...

The CABLE GUY just stands there and looks at PAUL, almost like a gunfighter sizing up his opponent to see who has the guts to draw first. PAUL calmly stares back at the CABLE GUY, then glances at his watch.

PAUL
(continuing)
Oh, well...Time's up. Good luck with your boss...You're going to need it.

PAUL turns around and walks out of the room past the CABLE GUY at the front door. After a moment, the CABLE GUY finally realizes that PAUL is serious. He calls out to PAUL, who is now walking down the hall.

CABLE GUY
(desperately)
...No, wait...Paulie...You win... You win...I won't move in. Just don't talk to my boss...

PAUL keeps walking and doesn't turn around. The CABLE GUY starts walking desperately after him.

CABLE GUY
(continuing, practically in tears)
Paulie, wait...I'll move to Oakwood two blocks away...You know, the Singles apartments... I don't mind, I'll get laid more... Just don't tell on me...

The CABLE GUY hurries after PAUL down the hall.

CUT TO:

EXT. PAUL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - AFTERNOON

PAUL is walking towards the parked moving truck in front of his apartment building. The two movers are leaning up against the back of the truck, talking and having a soda. The CABLE GUY is about fifteen feet behind PAUL, still following him. The CABLE GUY looks totally out of breath.

CABLE GUY
Paulie, it was all a gag...a joke...I was never really gonna fink on you...I wanted you to be a junior editor, remember? I wanted you to get Robin back...

The CABLE GUY runs a bit and catches up to PAUL.

CABLE GUY
(continuing, desperately)
Please don't tell on me...I don't wanna lose my job.
(thinks for a moment)
I don't wanna lose my cable...

PAUL turns around and faces him.

PAUL
(very straightforward)
...I haven't decided if I'm going to "tell on you" yet...
(PAUL has just mimicked the CABLE GUY's whining tone)
But either way, I am going to Friendly Cable this afternoon, I am going to apologize for receiving the stations and offer to repay them for these past two months...

PAUL takes a breath.

PAUL
(continuing)
And after I'm finished there, assuming I'm not incarcerated, I'm quitting that stupid job at Springhouse, pulling my cable out of the wall, and telling Robin the truth about everything...So you will no longer be holding anything over my head.

PAUL takes one last breath.

PAUL
(continuing)
After that, I don't care what happens...

There is one last shot of PAUL and the CABLE GUY. They both look totally exhausted.

CUT TO:

INT. FRIENDLY CABLE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES - AFTERNOON

PAUL finishes writing a personal check and hands it to a managerial-looking person.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRIENDLY CABLE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES - AFTERNOON

PAUL walks out the front door of the building towards his car, which is parked nearby along the curb.

CUT TO:

INT. PAUL'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

PAUL is cleaning out his desk.

CUT TO:

INT. ROBIN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - AFTERNOON

PAUL is standing at the front door of an apartment. The door is opened by ROBIN. Before she can say anything, PAUL starts talking. He is very aggressive, confident, and precise. All of this is a side to PAUL that ROBIN has never seen.

PAUL
I have a few things to get off my chest...You may not like them, and you may not want to see me anymore...But here goes: I don't have cable anymore; I don't have my job anymore; And those poems and letters that you got from me were really from Craig...
(takes a breath)
It was all because of Craig...He did everything...And I let him, because I thought the most important thing in the world was to get you back...But it's not... Not if it's based on my job...or my cable...or someone else's letters. After three years of us being together in college, you found out what it's like to be with me...You saw that I loved you, you saw that I was loyal, and you knew that I'd do anything for you. So if you want to be with me based on that: Great...I hope we're together forever. If you don't, I won't be happy, but I'll manage.

There is a shot of ROBIN. She is in such a state of shock, that she doesn't know how to react. She just looks at him as if she's never seen this person before.

PAUL
(continuing, a bit more warmly)
I know that may have sounded cold... But I want you in my life so badly... And after all I've been through, that's the only way I know how to say it.

ROBIN looks at PAUL, smiles, and throws her arms around him. At first, he just lets her do the hugging. Then, in a moment, he puts his arms around her too, and gives her an incredibly strong hug with everything he's got. We can see the emotion on both of their faces.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:
INT. LIVING ROOM OF PAUL'S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON
THREE MONTHS LATER

PAUL is in a business suit and is peering into his open briefcase on the coffee table. The phone rings. He walks a few steps to the kitchen counter and answers it. His voice is back to being the easy-going, good-natured guy we met at the beginning of the story.

PAUL
(into phone)
Hello...
(very pleasantly surprised)
Hey Mark...How's it going over at Springhouse?

CUT TO:

INT. PAUL'S OLD OFFICE at SPRINGHOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

MARK is on the phone with PAUL, while sitting behind the desk in PAUL'S old office. He looks very comfortable and it appears that he has PAUL'S old job. The CAMERA should either cut back and forth between the two locations or use a split-screen.

MARK
(into phone)
Everything's fine...I just wanted to see what you were up to...and see how the job hunt was going...

PAUL
Actually, I'm running out the door right now...I've got an interview in the English Department at Smith Community College...as a teaching assistant.

MARK
Well, that's great...I know it's tough out there.

PAUL
You're telling me...I've spent my entire life savings these past three months, trying to figure out what I wanted to do...But you know something: It always came back to why I majored in English in the first place: I love to write... So if I get this job, I'll have the chance to...and I can see what teaching's like at the same time.

There is a pause. PAUL takes a few loose papers out of his briefcase and looks at them.

MARK
Hey...You ever hear anything from you know who...

PAUL stops what he's doing.

PAUL
Nope...Still no contact with him... I never finked on him either...He just stopped calling me...

PAUL looks at his watch.

PAUL
(continuing)
Anyway, pal, I gotta run...

MARK
One last thing: How's everything with Robin?

PAUL
Great...We've worked everything out and things are better than ever. As a matter of fact, she's meeting me for dinner after the interview.

MARK
Well, say "hi" to her for me.

PAUL
Will do.
(pause)
Bye.

PAUL hangs up the phone.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY OF PAUL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - LATE AFTERNOON

PAUL is outside the front door of his apartment. He is facing the door as he locks it. He is wearing the same suit we saw him wearing a moment ago and carrying the briefcase, so it is obvious that he is just leaving for the interview. PAUL turns to walk down the hall, when suddenly the stairway door opens. Out walks a man who is the same size as the CABLE GUY, and he is wearing a Friendly Cable uniform. However, PAUL (and the audience) can't see his face, because his back is to PAUL. PAUL takes a deep breath and starts to walk towards him. PAUL was certainly not in the mood to see the CABLE GUY right now, but he has no reason to hide from him. As PAUL tentatively approaches the CABLE GUY, he decides to be friendly.

PAUL
...Hi, Craig.

The man turns around, but it is <u>not</u> CRAIG SWANK. Instead, it is another Friendly Cable serviceman.

OTHER CABLE GUY
What did you say?

PAUL
(realizing it's the wrong guy)
Oh, sorry...I thought you were Craig Swank.

OTHER CABLE GUY
Craig Swank? He doesn't work for us anymore...Quit a few months ago.

PAUL
(curiously)
What happened? Did he get in trouble for something?

OTHER CABLE GUY
Nope...Just quit on his own...out of the blue.

PAUL is a bit surprised. He thinks about this for a moment then walks past the man.

PAUL
Thanks. Have a good day.

CUT TO:

EXT. COMMUNITY COLLEGE - LATE AFTERNOON

PAUL is walking through the campus towards a medium-sized building. There are a lot of students walking, sitting, standing, talking, etc. There are various banners around the campus listing different meetings for various clubs, such as a Math Club meeting, sign-ups for intramural softball, etc. On his way into the building, PAUL looks up and sees a banner above the door. There is a quick CLOSE-UP of it. It reads:

"New Class Added:
Introduction to Cinema - 6:00 p.m."

PAUL enters the building and the door closes behind him.

CUT TO:

INT. COMMUNITY COLLEGE HALLWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

PAUL is walking down the hall and stops at a door marked "English Department." He opens the door and enters.

CUT TO:

EXT. COMMUNITY COLLEGE - EARLY EVENING

It is still light outside, but the sun has gone down. PAUL is standing outdoors near a small building at the front of the campus. His back is practically up against a bulletin board, and he is looking around as if he's waiting for someone. In a moment, he turns to his right, and ROBIN is standing there. She is smiling at him warmly.

ROBIN
...Well, how did it go?

PAUL
(modestly)
I hate to say it...But it didn't hurt that my last job was as an assistant editor at Springhouse.
(pause)
I got the job.

ROBIN throws her arms around him.

ROBIN
That's great! I knew you would.

They kiss and then break into a big hug. As they hug, they move a little bit, so that PAUL is now facing the bulletin board. He is completely mesmerized by her. There is a CLOSE-UP of his face, and it shows how happy he is. After a few moments, his eye catches something, and the expression on his face changes from ecstasy to curiosity. He then breaks out of the hug with ROBIN and walks a few steps till his face is staring right at the bulletin board.

PAUL
Hey, look at this...

ROBIN stands next to him at the bulletin board.

ROBIN
What?

PAUL
(still curious)
This:

He points to an eight-and-a-half-by-eleven inch piece of paper which is tacked onto the bulletin board. There is a CLOSE-UP of the flyer, however, the CLOSE-UP is not of the whole sheet of paper. Instead, the CLOSE-UP begins with a few lines, and then continues with a few more lines. The first CLOSE-UP is of the following part:

NEW CLASS ADDED:
INTRODUCTION TO CINEMA - 6:00 p.m.
Room 500

The next CLOSE-UP includes the above portion of the sheet of paper, but it also includes these lines below it:

Explore the world of Cinema with
a producer responsible for many
international films, including:

First Class Ninja - New Zealand
The Fragrant Burrito - Brazil
Shiatzu vs. Shiatzu (Chinese version of
Kramer vs. Kramer)

PAUL looks a bit further down the page and his mouth drops open. There is one last CLOSE-UP of the bottom of the page. It reveals the following:

Instructor: Frederico C. Swank

PAUL and ROBIN look at each other.

CUT TO:

INT. COMMUNITY COLLEGE HALLWAY - EARLY EVENING

PAUL and ROBIN are quickly walking down the hall and stop at a door that is marked "Room 500." ROBIN stands up on her tippy-toes, peaks into the small window in the door, then looks back at PAUL.

ROBIN
...Oh my God, it's him!
(thinks for a moment)
I wonder how he faked his credentials...

PAUL gives ROBIN a look like: "Are you forgetting who you're talking about?" ROBIN reacts as if she understands. They open the door, enter, and the door closes behind them.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - EARLY EVENING

The classroom is a fairly large lecture hall which appears to seat a few hundred people. However, there are only about thirty students in this class. They are scattered all over the room, as is typical of a college classroom. The layout of the room is that when PAUL and ROBIN enter, they are standing at the top of a stairway. At the bottom of the stairway is the classroom floor where the teacher stands, and where the chalkboard is, etc. The aisles of seats go up vertically from the bottom to the top of the stairway, similar to a sports stadium. PAUL and ROBIN take the two seats closest to the door they entered. At the front of the class is the CABLE GUY, and he looks like a caricature of an incredibly affected film director: He's wearing a french director's beret hat; He's wearing a white shirt buttoned up, with a scarf tied around his neck coming over the top of his shirt collar. At the moment, he is giving a passionate lecture about something. His concentration is broken for a moment when he sees PAUL and ROBIN, but he appears happy to see them. The CABLE GUY is speaking in a very affected, phony intellectual tone of voice.

CABLE GUY
(slowly and self-indulgently)
...So again, I ask the question: What is the true purpose of Film in our society?
(dramatic pause)
Is it to capture a slice of life and teach us a moral lesson?
(pause)
Is it to provide a sociological momento from one generation to the next?
(pause)
Or, is it simply a great excuse to get someone else in a room with the lights out?

PAUL and ROBIN look at each other.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - EVENING

Students are walking through the doors of the class, and it appears the lecture is over. PAUL and ROBIN are down at the front of the class talking to the CABLE GUY. The CABLE GUY'S french beret hat and jacket are now sitting on a chair. While he's back to his old personality a bit, there seems to be a new and pleasant mellowness to him.

CABLE GUY
...So you see...When you quit your job that day, it made me reevaluate my own life...And I realized: I never <u>just</u> wanted to be a cable guy...I only became a cable guy as a tool...A tool to get ahead...But somewhere along the way, I lost my vision.

The CABLE GUY walks over to a movie poster of the original Godfather. He points at it.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
<u>That's</u> who I really want to be.

PAUL
(a bit confused)
Who? A mafia boss?

CABLE GUY
No! Francis Ford Coppola. I want to make The Godfather part IV! As a matter of fact, I was pitching it over at Paramount last week... Kind of a 90's version...with Johnny Depp as the new Godfather and Andrew McCarthy as his consigliere...

PAUL and ROBIN exchange glances.

CABLE GUY
(continuing, to PAUL)
So, when do you start here?

PAUL
Next week.

CABLE GUY
(a bit sadly)
Well, you don't have to quit because of me or anything. I'll be out of your hair soon. I'm only teaching this one ten-week quarter as an experiment...You know, to give a little something back...

The CABLE GUY gives PAUL a very sincere look.

CABLE GUY
(very genuinely)
...And by the way, you were right about that stuff you said about friendship: A friendship's gotta be based on trust...And enjoying each other's company...Not blackmail.
(pause)
I didn't deserve a friend like you.

The CABLE GUY turns away from PAUL and ROBIN for a moment to take his blazer off of the chair. PAUL and ROBIN look at each other. They can't tell if he's being sincere or just laying on the schmaltz. There is an awkward moment of silence. Even the CABLE GUY doesn't seem to know what to say.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
Well...I better start preparing tomorrow's lecture...So good luck with everything in your life... And maybe I'll see you around.

The CABLE GUY turns away from PAUL and ROBIN, and he starts putting his lecture notes into a loose folder. He walks over to the chalkboard and begins to erase it. PAUL and ROBIN look at each other, then turn around and start to walk away. As they're walking up the stairs towards the exit, the CABLE GUY, while pretending to be looking only at the chalkboard, takes a quick glance at them and sees that they're walking out. He looks disappointed. He then quickly goes back to erasing. After a few more moments, the CABLE GUY slyly sneaks another peak at them. However, now PAUL and ROBIN are almost at the top of the stairs, and it appears that they are clearly leaving. The CABLE GUY suddenly looks a bit sad, almost choked up, and once again goes back to erasing, though there's not much more to erase. At the top of the stairs, ROBIN is already out the door. PAUL is still holding the door open and is about to leave, but he stops and turns back to take one more look at the CABLE GUY. The CABLE GUY does not notice, because he has gone back to erasing the chalkboard and is now not looking back. PAUL has an expression on his face almost of curiosity. He's not sure what he's feeling. He thought he hated the CABLE GUY, but maybe now that the CABLE GUY isn't pressuring him in any way, he doesn't really mind him. After PAUL has been standing at the top of the stairs for these few moments, ROBIN steps back into the room to join him. She notices that he's looking at the CABLE GUY. PAUL then stops and looks at her. She then whispers something quietly to PAUL. PAUL hears it, pauses, thinks about it for a moment, then speaks loudly.

PAUL
(calling to front of class)
Hey, Craig...

The CABLE GUY stops erasing the chalkboard and turns around. He is genuinely surprised to see PAUL still standing there, and we can tell that the CABLE GUY is happy.

PAUL
(continuing)
...Would you happen to be in the mood right now for Clay's potato skins?

CABLE GUY
(very seriously and slowly)
Am I in the mood for Clay's potato skins?
(pause, then seriously)
What kind of a question's that?
(pause)
That's like asking if Gene Hackman was in The French Connection... Or if Woody Allen likes young girls...

There is a CLOSE-UP of PAUL and ROBIN smiling. When the CAMERA goes back to the CABLE GUY, we see him carrying his folder and walking towards the stairs leading to PAUL and ROBIN. The CAMERA remains back near the chalkboard, giving a long-shot of the CABLE GUY as he begins to climb the stairs with PAUL and ROBIN waiting for him at the top.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
...Actually, this is perfect...I needed to run a few ideas by some young people...You know, the target audience out there is ages 18-30...And you guys are it...
(pause)
How do you like a story about an old war veteran who's now a hairdresser to all the big Hollywood stars...Except, he won't cut Jane Fonda's hair because of the Hanoi thing...

The CAMERA pulls a bit further back, and the CABLE GUY'S voice has gotten further away.

CABLE GUY
(continuing)
Or how about an idea for a horror film, where a Saint Bernard terrorizes a town by walking around only on his hind legs...
(pause)
...Naturally, if they used HEF, I'd get an extra commission...

As the CABLE GUY nears the top of the stairs, he is still talking. However, the volume is now faint, and we can no longer make out the words. When he finally does reach the top of the stairs:

FADE OUT

THE END